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Date of Graduation (Month Year): February 2019

School and Department: Graduate School of Education, Department of International & Comparative Education

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Nagwa Megahed

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**Exploring Higher Education Policy Reforms in Different Contexts:  
A Comparative Study of Australia, Canada and Egypt**

A Thesis Submitted by

**Eman Mahmoud Abdel-Tawab**

Submitted to the Department of International & Comparative Education  
July 12, 2018

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts  
in Educational Leadership  
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Running head: EXPLORING HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS IN DIFFERENT  
CONTEXTS.

Exploring Higher Education Policy Reforms in Different Contexts:

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By

**Eman Mahmoud Abdel-Tawab**

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Education (GSE)

The American University in Cairo (AUC)

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts in

Educational Leadership

Under the Supervision of

**Dr. Nagwa Megahed**

Summer 2018

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## **Abstract**

This study is concerned with exploring higher education policy and reforms enacted by three diverse countries, Australia, Canada, and Egypt, to improve the quality of education and its relevancy to job market needs. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of similarities and differences in context and motivations for reform and the subsequent results across the three countries and thus identify the lessons learned. This, in turn, will provide an answer to the prominent question of how can Egypt benefit from the higher education reform journeys undertaken by Australia and Canada. The study employs a “simultaneous comparative analysis,” following Bereday’s four-step method: description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and simultaneous comparison. It takes into account the socio-economic context, historical background, and cultural context of each of the three countries. Next, it explores the main higher education reform initiatives, challenges and results in each country.

The main findings explored in this study reveal the urgent need for quality audit procedure to assess each institution’s effectiveness in achieving its goals. It also advocates for assuring and improving the quality of higher education through building self-regulating system. The findings also learn from the Australian experience in providing vocational and technical education, which focused on providing skills for the job market. The study concludes that a quality assurance system is more powerful than accreditation system, as it focuses on student learning outcomes. There is much to learn from policy and practice in Australia to maintain and assure quality. The study recommends conducting consultation with representatives of all stakeholders prior to the development of a new program in reference to the Canadian experiences. Moreover, the role of policy and decision makers must strengthen quality assurance system in the institution internally and from an authoritative agency externally. The study recommends that Egypt prioritizes the completion of accreditation of its all higher education institutions and revisit its admission policy to HE.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
CAPMAS	Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CPU	Egyptian Council of Private U universities
CTEC	Australia: The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission
HEEP	Egyptian Higher Education Enhancement Program
HELP	Australian Higher Education Loan Program
HESA	Australian Higher Education Support Act 2003
MOHE	Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education
NAQAAE	National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education
NARS	National Academic Reference Standards
NQAC	Egyptian National Quality Assurance Commission
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAT	Professional Academy for Teachers
QAAP	Egyptian Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project
SCPU	Egyptian Supreme Council for Private Universities
SCTC	Egyptian Supreme Council for Technical Colleges
SCU	Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities
SPU	Egyptian Strategic Planning Unit
TEQSA	Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TVET	Egyptian Technical Vocational Education and Training
VET	Australian Vocational and Technical Education

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

During the past decade, governments in most countries seeking social and economic development have prioritized improving the quality of higher education. One way in which governments have attempted to improve education policy and practice is by adopting educational quality initiatives (OECD, 2010). Neoliberalism of education is a popular mechanism for improving education quality because advocates believe it meets the needs of businesses and the job market (OECD, 2008).

Studying the major higher education reforms in three different national contexts to explore these countries' experiences provides a better understanding of different reform initiatives, successes achieved, and challenges overcome in order to identify the lessons learned for reforming higher education policy and practice. This contributes to achieving the goals of improving education quality and increasing education relevancy to the job market requirements. The latter is necessary due to the urgent need for more creative and entrepreneurial graduates equipped for challenging contemporary career life. Skills and human power are the backbone of socio-economic prosperity and national development, and education is what prepares people for this role (Jean-Louis, 2015). For the above reasons, this study discusses the policy reform of higher education in Australia, Canada, and Egypt in a simultaneous comparative study. This study defines "comparative study" as the simultaneous comparison of several countries or regions in a particular interest field through a four-step method consisting of description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and simultaneous comparison (Bereday's, 1964). Examining differences and similarities in context through comparative methods explains either commonality or diversity in outcomes (Bray, 2014).

### **1.2 Comparative Country Cases**

The study focuses on higher education policy reforms in Australia, Canada, and Egypt. It is well known that Australia and Canada enjoy a good global reputation of their strong education systems. Based on an assessment of higher educational level among OECD countries, Canada ranks highest with 55% of the population consisting of educated persons. Additionally, Canada is a world leader on online and distance learning education (Jean-Louis, 2015). Australian graduate employment is also quite

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high, with 81% of graduates finding work within four months of their date of graduation (Jongbloed, 2008). Regarding Egypt, the country has one of the leading education systems in the Middle East and Africa, in terms of its long history and large number of higher education universities and institutions (Mina, 2001). When it comes to international rankings of Australia and Canada, both countries' universities are top performers on lists assessing education quality, relevance to job market, environment, and resources (U21, 2016). This assessment was part of the "Universitas 21 (U21)" report completed by the 2016 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems, one of the internationally prominent projects used to assess national higher education systems, including the private and public education sectors, and present the best overall systems. In the 2016 summary report, the overall results ranked the top 10 countries in order as follows: United States, Switzerland, Denmark, United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Singapore Canada, and Australia. The 2016 top ten list contains the same countries as in the 2014 ranking report, but with a slight change in the order (U21, 2016). From this, it is inferable that Australia and Canada continued to be on the top ten for three years. This report developed the rankings system for fifty national higher education systems from all continents that the report evaluates based on 25 attributes. The results are useful for all concerned bodies: governments, institutions, and learners. The main ranking compares country's performance against the best countries in the world based on four measures: resources, environment, connectivity and output. The 2016 U21 ranking report examines the relationship between inputs (resources and environment) and outcomes (output and connectivity) data in order to provide measures of system productivity and ways for improving outcomes. The four modules are described as follows:

**Resources:** In order to compare quality of teaching measures across countries, the module of resources per student in part serves as an indirect means to measure the contribution of higher education to a nation's research effort. The 2016 Universitas 21 report includes measures of expenditure in higher education institutions. Definitely, adequate resources are a necessary condition for a well-performing higher education system, whether in public or private sectors. One measure employed by the report is assessing expenditure by institutions as a share of GDP. The highest ranked countries for resources are Denmark, Singapore, the United States, Canada, and Sweden (U21, 2016).

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**Environment:** According to the U21 (2016), the environment measure ensures that resources are well used. In addition, the preferred education environment is one that allows institutions considerable autonomy tempered by external monitoring and competition. This module measures to what extent national systems meet the defined criteria. Well performing higher education institutions need extensive autonomy in budgets and degree offerings, and there should be appropriate competition between institutions, external monitoring of performance, and equality of opportunity. The U21 measures whether national systems possess these characteristics through the results of three survey findings complemented by three measures: female participation (students and staff), diversity of institutions, and the quality of data on higher education. In 2016, the United States, Hong Kong SAR, Finland, New Zealand and the Netherlands ranked highest in terms of environment.

**Connectivity:** The connectivity measure embraces the two-way flow of information between the higher education sector and society. The worth of a national higher education system is enhanced if it is well connected domestically with the rest of the society and internationally in education and research. Connectivity promotes technical change and economic growth. In the connectivity module, Switzerland is the clear leader followed by Denmark, Austria and the United Kingdom.

**Output:** This module includes research output and impact, student performance, the national stock of graduates and researchers, the quality of best universities, and employability of graduates. Links between national universities and the international community also indicates transmission of knowledge, a key indicator of educational output. The governments encourage institutions to strengthen their relationships with the job market and the community. In 2016, the United States ranked first, followed by the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland.

To conclude, the U21 report calculates the overall educational rank by weighting the percentage deviations for each of the four modules. The weights are not valued the same: resources, environment, connectivity are each 20% of the overall score, while output counts for 40% of the final rank. It is clear now how referring back to the “Universities 21 Ranking in 2016” report that the rankings reflect the relative performance of countries by looking at absolute values of various measures (U21, 2016).

### Comparing Australia and Canada

According to the U21 Ranking of the National Higher Education Systems between 2014 and 2016, it is possible to compare between Australia and Canada's results in the assessed key indicators. The following results explain the performance levels of both countries. In the overall results, Australia ranks tenth and Canada ranks the ninth, and Canada has consistently performed better over the three years as shown in Figure (1.1).

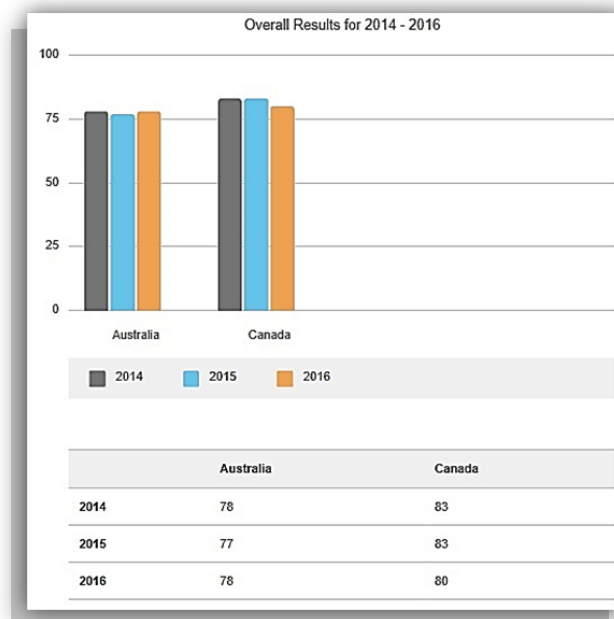


Figure (1.1): The overall results from 2014 to 2016 in Canada & Australia. (Source: U21, 2016)

Regarding the education output, Figure (1.2) measures the data taken from both countries and compares the higher education output level results from 2014 to 2016. Both countries' strong output results over the last three years prove that they are performing well in education quality. Their results are close to each other in spite of their different initiatives and programs. Significantly, Australia has improved in the output category yearly, while Canada has remained at a steady level over the three years.

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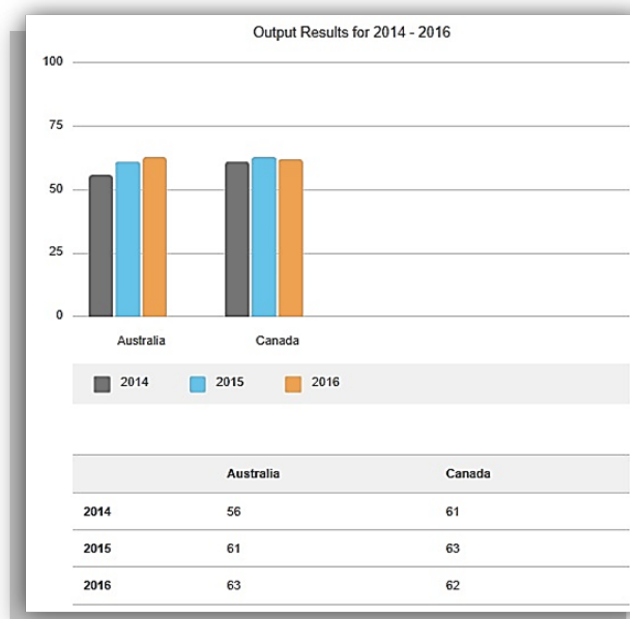


Figure (1.2): The output level from 2014 to 2016 in Canada & Australia (Source: U21, 2016).

In reference to the U21 (2016) report, Australia ranks tenth in the overall results, combining ranks of 14<sup>th</sup> for resources, 7<sup>th</sup> for environment, 13<sup>th</sup> for connectivity and 3<sup>rd</sup> for output. The last indicator is important because it measures a group of attributes, including participation rates, research performance, the existence of excellent universities, and employability of graduates. In comparison, Canada's overall results combine the ranks of 4<sup>th</sup> for Resources, 34<sup>th</sup> for Environment, 11<sup>th</sup> for Connectivity, and 7<sup>th</sup> for Output. In short, Canada and Australia compete internationally to obtain the most reputable quality of education, attract a larger number of higher education students, and increase the country's revenue from education. However, the U21 Ranking report indicates that Australia achieved greater levels of higher education quality than Canada in reference to the output module, where Australia ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> and Canada ranks 7<sup>th</sup>. The following section clarifies why the researcher has chosen Australia, Canada and Egypt for this study.

### Why Australia?

Australia is among the top ten ranked countries assessed by the factors of resources, environment, output, and connectivity to the job market requirements (U21, 2016). Australia is also one of the best five locations to live and study because of its natural landscapes and strong economic situation. Over the last decade, the Australian economy has grown while maintaining low inflation and a high



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employment rate. In 2006, it had only a 5% unemployment rate among people of working age. Thus, holding an academic degree is an advantage in the Australian workforce. As discussed above, the 2016 U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems ranked Australia tenth in the overall results, which combined ranks of 14<sup>th</sup> for resources, 7<sup>th</sup> for environment, 13<sup>th</sup> for connectivity, and 3<sup>rd</sup> for output (U21, 2016). As this study concerns the goals of higher education quality and relevance to job market, the researcher would like to highlight Australia's ranking of 13<sup>th</sup> for connectivity and 3<sup>rd</sup> for output. This is convenient for addressing the Australian experience in improving its higher education system. According to the connectivity measure, Australia ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the number of international students but performs less well for connectivity with industry (U21, 2016). Since 1997, Australia has exported of education in general (Jongbloed, 2008). The country encourages international students to apply for the high quality higher education options and draws on its education system's excellent reputation globally. In addition to that, it is one of the top ten countries in terms of investment in the field of scientific research and development. The Australian education system is highly respected due to its structure and strict regulatory environment, which supports and protects the interests of all international students. Australian graduates are highly sought after on the world stage (ELS University Guide, 2017).

### **Why Canada?**

According to the U21 report (2016), Canada ranked 9<sup>t</sup> in the overall results. This overall result combined the rank of 4<sup>th</sup> for resources, 34<sup>th</sup> for Environment, 11<sup>th</sup> for connectivity, and finally, 7<sup>th</sup> for output. In the Output category, Canada ranked 7<sup>th</sup> for total academic publications and 10<sup>th</sup> for publications deflated by population. The country ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> for the educational qualifications of its workforce, and most famous three universities in Canada ranked fourth in reputation and output (U21, 2016).

In the connectivity category, Canada ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> for web impact, 3<sup>rd</sup> for business ratings of knowledge transfer, and 17<sup>th</sup> for joint publications with the job market. In fact, learners are excited to pursue their education in Canada because of its strong education system and positive international experiences (U21, 2016). The education quality and research opportunities are significant factors in learner's decisions to pursue a degree in Canada. University campuses across Canada offer multicultural

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environments, beautiful spaces, and friendly people. According to the ELS University Guide (2017), Canada's education system is the core of the country's success. Overall, the international learners that enrolled in university degree programs rose from 55% in 1992 to 67% in 2008 (Jean-Louis, 2015).

Canadian universities and colleges offer programs that range from fine arts to biology, commerce, astronomy, media studies, and religion. Recently, Canadian institutions have offered more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate degree programs and professional certificates. From this, it is inferable that the country is very keen to offer innovative and modernized programs and adapt to international changes. In fact, Canada is a leader in business, political diplomacy, technology, arts, and culture. Its education system is the core of the nation's success, and its graduates are central figures on the world stage (ELS University Guide, 2017). In addition to the quality of education available, Canada is a popular country for two main reasons. Their tuition fees are lower and their immigration procedures less difficult than other high performers, for example the United States (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

### **Why Egypt?**

Egypt is one of the primary countries of the research, and discussing its higher education issues is urgently needed for national development and the future of its youth graduates. There is an array of domestic studies tackling the education system of the country as a whole. The Egyptian higher education system has a long history, and the country was one of the major knowledge producing sources for African and Arabian civilizations (Emira, 2014).

Despite its historic prominence, the modern Egyptian education system is not capable of meeting current market demands. There are number of factors that cause the high unemployment rates among Egyptian graduates, including an increasing youth population, a limited public sector, and the dominance of private sector (OECD, 2009). Another factor is the quality of the higher education system. The lack of educational quality and career life skills are the main challenges that face new graduates applying for contemporary vacancies (Hamid, 2008). Unemployment rates measure the match between education system outcomes and the required skills in the job market and shows Egypt is struggling in this regard. Those who encounter lack of

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educational qualifications are at risk of employment marginalization or unemployment (OECD, 2010).

Egypt has achieved a significant part of its educational development plans and has made remarkable efforts to increase educational participation, institutional accreditation, funding shortage and distributing of new universities all over the country. However, the country is still facing challenges such as inequalities, regional bias, and a new generation of unemployment among the educated, as well as shortages of technical and professional skills (OECD, 2010). However, the curricula of formal education still do not consider such incorporate market needed skills. This is problematic because as economies increasingly globalize with complex job markets, Egypt can no longer afford to marginalize education (Ginsburg & Megahed, 2008).

In reference to the U21 Ranking report (2016), Egypt did not rank among the top 50 countries analyzed in the report, despite the fact that the country initiated a sequence of reform movements over the years to adapt to global modern changes. However, after referring to the Global Competitiveness Index of 2007, Egypt ranked 65<sup>th</sup> out of 128 nations and 4<sup>th</sup> out of 48 countries assessed to be at the same stage of development. The report recognized Egypt faced serious problems with financing higher education, inefficient bureaucracy, and an inadequately educated workforce. It considered the competitive disadvantages facing Egypt as higher education and training, technological readiness and innovation (OECD, 2010). Moreover, as mentioned in different studies, lack of education quality is a major factor that is widening the gap between the Egyptian graduates' skills and the modern job market demands (UNDP, 2010; World Bank, 2007).

### **1.3 Study Purpose and Questions**

The purpose of this study is to examine higher education policy reforms that contributed to reforming the policies and practices to improve higher education quality and increase education's relevance to job market requirements in three different contexts. This provides a better understanding of different reform initiatives, achievements, and challenges overcome in the three cases studies to identify the lessons learned for reforming higher education policy and practice. The study makes recommendations with the goal of finding an answer to the question of "How can Egypt benefit from the higher education reform journeys of Australia and Canada?"

In response to the purpose of study, there is a pressing need to answer the following study questions to establish the conceptual framework:

- (1) What are the historical and socio-economic contexts of higher education in Australia, Canada, and Egypt?
- (2) What are the main higher education reform initiatives undertaken by Australia, Canada, and Egypt during the last decade?
- (3) What are the similarities and differences among the three countries in terms of their higher education reforms for improving educational quality and relevance to the job market needs?
- (4) What are the lessons learned from the comparison of higher education reforms in the three examined contexts? In addition, what are the recommendations concluded?

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Some conceptual clarifications drawn from Bray (2014) are essential before proceeding to the theoretical and methodological factors regarding country-level analysis. Chapter Two covers stage one of this study and discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of this comparative study through three sections: introduction, related theories, and the main concepts discussed throughout the study.

### **2.1 Introduction**

During the past decade, most nations' hope has centered on improving the quality of their education system, because there is growing awareness of the impact of education on nations' future development, cultural enlightenment, and economic growth. Therefore, modern reforms develop to close the gap between education and employment because of the urgent need for more creative, flexible and entrepreneurial young people equipped for the challenges of the contemporary career life. There is an imperative for leaders, reformers, policy-makers and/or decision-makers to establish more effective and affordable career-training institutions that are highly connected to the job market requirements.

Discussing higher education reform through examining system policies and procedures means the adaptation of new education strategies and modern methods. Reform motivations vary from one country to another and may be driven by the need to realize the objective of improving educational quality, avoid negative effects of institutional self-governance, learn from other countries experiences, or use best experiences as a reference. The next step in the reform process is planning and implementing each state's own education system policies and strategies. To review the national context and reform the education system, this study discusses the three main pillars of education reform: learners, institutions, and education systems. In terms of learners, reforms discuss how to raise learners' outcomes, equity and education quality, ensure educational availability to all people, and improve learner's mental, physical, experiential, and skills development as measured on all scales. Institutional reforms discuss how to raise institutions' quality of learner's outcomes, improvement, standards, accreditation, skills and practices, evaluation, and assessment. Education systems address how to best organize the system to deliver education policy, governance and structure, funding resources, management, and

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conducive environment (Oldfield & Baron, 2000; Barker, 2002; Lagrosen, Seyyed-Hashemi, & Leitner, 2004; Scott, 2008; Tam, 2010). To address the reform initiatives undertaken by Australia, Canada, and Egypt, there are number of theoretical developments the study must discuss in further details.

### **2.2 Related Theories**

#### **2.2.1 How Globalization & Neoliberalism Relates?**

Over the last two decades, the amount of literature discussing globalization and neoliberalization of higher education has increased. Many researchers concluded that globalization controls the direction of higher education institutions and governments. They define globalization in this context as the concept of “act locally and think globally,” which is a trend all over the world. Becker (2008) mentions that the pressures of globalization motivated various countries to apply major changes in the relationships between the country, the job market, and higher education institutions. Consequently, those changes affect the roles and organization of higher education generally and of universities in specific (Butera, 2000; Cowen, 2000; Fulton, 2002, 2003; Zajda, 2005, 2006; Henry et al., 2001; Schugurensky, 1999). Because of globalization’s effects on higher education, universities are all subject to the same governance processes; nevertheless, not all institutions are international (Hamano, 2011). Similarly, the neoliberalization of national education has developed significantly worldwide in response to urgent economic needs and job market requirements (OECD, 2007). OECD named “economic growth” as the major aim of education to raise the importance of education’s role in a country’s future and to increase marketization of education (Hamano, 2011). Higher education became the nation’s most valuable asset and a requirement for enriching peoples’ skills and boosting human development. Theoretically, the nation will then enhance its economic, political, social and cultural situation.

According to Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb (2002), neoliberalism is a system that advantages those profiting from forcing disciplinary policies by a group of international agencies and financial institutions. For example, the dominant world economic powers enact conditional loans and retaliatory measures against weaker states for their own benefit. Neoliberalism systems lead social and governmental leaders to value the needs of the job marketplace over other national needs. Scholars

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such as Short (2012) define neoliberalism as an intellectual, political, and economic project that emphasizes the use of market-based mechanisms to organize economic, political, and social affairs and promotes economic policies designed to lower inflation, deficits, and public debt to create “macroeconomic stability.” As a theory of political economy, neoliberalism promotes the universalization of the market form, based on the political-ethical positions that markets are a direct expression of human rationality and standardization of criteria (El Bouhali, 2015). Another theory of neoliberalism views it as a component of globalization that establishes the form through which national and international economic relations are structured (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Neoliberalism advocates also offer a strong education system as an example of creating a competitive advantage among regions and corporations. Governments realize that higher education plays a crucial role for economic development and the link between neoliberalism and globalization as it relates to trade or the free market. Educating citizens with a competitive advantage to the globalized neoliberal markets, therefore, becomes the primary purpose of the education system. This rationale has driven many of the educational reforms discussed in subsequent sections of this study.

Neoliberalism has become the dominant socio-economic paradigm and has tremendous impact on all aspects of life. Researchers discuss the impact of neoliberalism on a variety of sectors, including its impact on education and students. They have documented the rapid and fundamental changes taking place within colleges and universities, faculties, and students (Saunders, 2007). The ideology of neoliberalism seeks to govern the world systems and promotes the interests of elite, while making world populations believe in the necessity such dominance. Globally, neoliberalism depends on privatization and commodification as the means to attain its ends and seeks to transform or destroy most public spaces and services (Harvey, 2005). The debates about the advantages and disadvantages of the neoliberalism as a concept influence the trajectory of higher education reform initiatives.

In fact, the economic and political events of the past two decades have had a massive impact on the education system. Every country, even the ones ranked highest in higher education performance, has an agenda for educational improvements informed by globalization and neoliberalism. Enhancing the quality of higher education and research is a priority for the government in most countries seeking

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internationalization and higher education development, currently interpreted as an international knowledge economy. Some scholars define the knowledge economy as production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance (Powell & Snellman, 2004). Briefly, the main factor beyond the development of education policy and practice in the contemporary reform process is the adoption of neoliberal education quality (Graham, 2013). That is why higher education is a key factor to success of investments in economic and social development. The needs of the global job market influenced the educational reforms undertaken in Canada and Australia because of dominant narratives of globalization and neoliberalism.

### **2.2.2 Neoliberalism's Impact on HE Institutions and Students**

#### **Universities and Institutions**

There is a limited but significant discussion concerning the impact of neoliberalism on higher education steered by Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004). They note an increasing number of researchers investigating the rise of academic capitalism as a manifestation of neoliberalism in colleges and universities. They describe the fundamental changes happening within the higher education sector, but their investigations do not link these changes to the greater process of neoliberalism. In the neoliberal world, universities are one of the legitimate knowledge producers and disseminators; individualistic goals and extrinsic benefits increasingly dominate an education system in which students became consumers of an educational product. The global industry of higher education efficiently produces a consumer product with the main purpose of improving the economic situations of the purchaser (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Academia defines capitalism as “the involvement of colleges and faculty in market-like behaviors,” and these behaviors have seemingly increased over the past two decades (Rhoades & Slaughter, 2004). Over the same timeframe, universities began to transform their basic functions from teaching and research into revenue generation (Saunders, 2007). Recently, institutions engaged with the market by establishing companies grounded in academic research to advertise the institution's research, focusing on patenting and licensing and becoming private consultants for businesses (Anderson, 2001).



### **Students**

The perception of education was re-conceptualized from a social good with intrinsic value to a product that a student purchases. Another second of the neoliberalization of education is the belief educators should not disseminate biased educational content, and thus ought not to bring their political views into the classroom (Saunders, 2007). In the long run, the focus on education as a marketable commodity has negatively impacted students' educational experience and their sense of community. One way in which this occurs is through students' choice on which activities to engage in while in school. Astin (1998) states that students are increasingly competitive and their interest in the liberal arts and teaching careers decreased. Students also articulated decreased support of governmental action aimed at combating social and economic issues, which is also associated with the neoliberal agenda (Saunders, 2007). To conclude, neoliberalism's impact on higher education is significant. The financial changes affected institutions and universities. These changes are connected to neoliberal ideas and values. Consequently, the lack of previously held values affects students negatively and creates unstable community due to the rise and power of neoliberalism.

### **2.2.3 Neoliberal Job Market and the Skills of HE Graduates**

#### **Driving Innovation and Excellence**

With reference to the Australian concept that "strong higher education system benefits everyone," higher education became one of the key factors in the development of human resources innovation to boost the state's future capabilities and competitiveness. The Australian governmental report mentioned their higher education system has high student satisfaction and graduate employment outcomes. Those two advantages are notable because only 3% of Australian bachelor's degree holders are unemployed and only 8% of Australians do not hold a post-high school degree. The global job market accepts Australian qualifications, which is key to the system's marketability (Australian Government report, 2016). In the same report, the authors mentioned the government's commitment to providing universities with additional flexibility to innovate, differentiate themselves, and offer students more choice and higher quality offerings. To provide this ability, Australia gives institutions freedom to set fees for a small cohort of their students enrolled in

identified high quality, innovative courses. The introduction of these flagship courses, originally suggested in the Higher Education Base Funding Review (2011), would deliver the benefits of differentiation, excellence, and innovation among universities (Australian Government report, 2016). In Canada, the government responded to excellence and rise of knowledge-based economy in the international market by creating federal research programs focused on the commercialization of university research and the creation of university and market relations, such as Networks of Centers of Excellence, as well as industrial training and development programs targeting higher educational students (Industry Canada, 2007). Indeed, the modern reform agenda focuses on the importance of matching between business needs and universities to further innovation. In this regard, driving innovation and excellence became a competitive advantage.

### **2.3 Main Concepts**

#### **2.3.1 Quality in Higher Education**

Educational quality helps societies improve personal efficacy and become wealthier in terms of income and productivity. The World Conference of Higher Education (1998) articulated a simple definition of education quality as a multi-dimensional concept that is composed of multiple functions and activities: teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, academic environment, buildings and facilities, and equipment and services provided to the community. Educational quality also makes a clear difference in achieving Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO, 2005).

According to Srikanthan & Dalrymple (2003), there are four sectors to consider when defining quality: (1) education providers (funding bodies, community, and owners), (2) product users (the learners), (3) users of education outputs (employers), and (4) the employees of the sector (academics and administrators). Each of these sectors has its own specifications and impact on educational quality. That is why establishing a quality culture in higher education needs the involvement of all the concerned parties to guarantee the incorporation of different perspectives and requirements (Bobby, 2014).

Meanwhile, the achieved educational outcomes and by their impact on economic and social progress measures the success of education systems. People

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expect education system to offer quality and efficiency in learning provisions, reduce barriers, and develop efficient and sustainable approaches for financing learning. Quality in higher education is a matter of political substance and technical implementation. Knowledgeable society requires a capable, highly qualified and innovative work force. Measurement becomes a function of quality assurance process (input, process, and outcomes) that fulfills expectations and measures up to needed requirements (Harvey, as cited in OECD 2008, P. 12).

One measure of educational quality is the ability of the learners to progress throughout their studies. Therefore, measuring retention and success data became an important tool to assess the quality of educational processes (Martin, 1994). Managing the growth and development of educational systems can come through enhancing methods that improve access, enhancing quality, increasing performance, and boosting human values (OECD, 2010). There is a global debate about quality of teaching and learning in higher education, and the debate pays special attention to the question of how university teachers provide quality education. It is very clear that in most countries, the main trend in higher education reforms is achieving high education quality effectively and efficiently. This trend focuses on the tools of quality assurance and improvements in learning and teaching practices, as well as measuring the influence of the quality assurance system. Universities internal quality assurance is a mechanism that presents documentation about daily academic activities for transparency. Accordingly, quality assurance (QA) is a significant concern that has its own standard procedures and framework. This concept has become important independent of regular educational quality due to the belief that traditional academic controls are inadequate to current challenges and that more explicit assurance about quality is essential. Indeed, issues of quality control and assurance have become a major focus of attention for most governments worldwide (Ramadan et al., 2011).

### **2.3.2 Internal Quality Assurance**

The globe is moving towards excellence and equity in education and in higher education in particular. Internal institutional quality assurance is the foundation of quality in education as a whole system. Meade (1995) outlines the systematic quality improvement of one Australian university, which included developing a continuous quality-improvement management plan, devolving responsibility for quality

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advancement to faculties, and improving documentation of procedures and outcomes. As a learning institution, the university developed the following: leadership positions to support quality management including committees, discussion forums and publications; processes mechanisms for evaluation, monitoring and development; and mechanisms for benchmarking and networking. According to Harvey and Williams (2010), Meade's work outlines barriers to implementation and strategies to overcome these barriers, with a view to work with staff to establish a "learning culture."

Horsburgh (1999) examines the internal quality monitoring processes in two institutions based in New Zealand and the UK to observe how these processes may contribute to transformation. She emphasizes self-regulation and innovation, in particular through delegating responsibility for quality to teaching teams and fostering improvement processes. Additionally, Barrow and Curzon-Hobson (2003) discuss how a New Zealand polytechnic university, UNITEC, attempted to shift from seeing quality as systems compliance to understanding it as centered on personal care and individual responsibility making a real difference in classrooms. UNITEC developed a group of quality principles to replace the comprehensive standards and process in the existing quality management system. They encouraged staff to develop tailored processes, through controlled pilots, rather than unthinkingly implementing pre-defined institutional procedures.

Jones (2014) tackles the quality of Canadian higher education, which has emerged as a vital issue across many provinces during the previous decade. Provincial governments are searching for mechanisms to hold autonomous universities accountable for quality but have struggled with provincial accreditation systems or major quality assessment mechanisms, because of a high level of distrust between governments and the public universities. The expanded number of degrees granted and the emergence of various alternative types of educational institutions raised a new set of questions about the model features that those institutions should adopt, in addition to the questions about degree quality (Marshall, 2008).

Recent discussions on quality focus on the development and assessment of learning outcomes (Jones, 2014). In reference to the Canadian practices, the Council of Ministers of Education reacted to some of these concerns by establishing a Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework that declared the estimated competencies related to each academic degree to standardize the required outcomes. Ontario

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established a qualifications framework, and Ontario universities established the quality mechanism based on the assumption that programs would develop measureable outcomes congruent with degree qualification expectations reviewable in accordance with institutional guidelines. A quality control council created by the Council of Ontario Universities, the provincial university-sector umbrella organization, would periodically audit these processes (Jones, 2014).

Similarly, between 2004 and 2005, Australia underwent an extensive process of consultation that led to the development of National Protocols. Then, the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) endorsed a revised set of National Protocols effective December 2007. They designed the National Protocols to ensure consistent criteria and standards across Australia and include a number of new criteria and processes to develop further types of higher education institutions, such as specialist universities, self-accrediting institutions, university colleges, and overseas institutions. These National Protocols relate to registration and accreditation procedures (Jongbloed, 2008).

To conclude, Internal Quality Assurance system and accreditation are essential to protecting the standing and competitiveness of country's universities nationally and internationally. While the methods Australia and Canada have undertaken to ensure quality and education differ, both have central goals of standardization and oversight. A review of the relevant literature reveals the importance of quality assurance within institutions and across the higher education as a whole.

### **2.3.3 Accreditation**

Since concerned parties focus on student learning outcomes in higher education for to the global competition, actors outside higher education began to invest in higher educational quality. For instance, the governments in Australia, the US, and the UK paid considerable attention to student learning outcomes and results to improve their educational quality (HEEP, 2012). To understand the processes of accreditation, OECD (2008) discusses institution's accreditation process and defines accreditation as a measurement tool to evaluate institution qualification for offering a certain program. Institutions consider accreditation as the permission to operate certain programs and/or eligibility for its students to receive certain grants.

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Organizations award accreditation results based on a PASS or FAIL decision. Accreditation may encompass the whole institution and all its programs or be limited to new institutions or recently begun programs (OECD, 2008). The process often involves a set of procedures, including self-assessments, document analysis, scrutiny of performance indicators, constituted panels, peer visits, inspections, or delegating responsibility to internal panels, often via entrustments to outsider observers, examiners or advisors (OECD, 2014).

The study conducted by Norton and Cakitaki (2016) finds that the Australian state government established public universities as self-accrediting institutions, apart from the Australian National University. The government categorizes all universities under State or Territory legislation. The State and Territory governments undertake the administration of university legislation, accreditation of new universities, accreditation of the HE courses offered by non-self-accrediting institutions, and auditing of university financial statements. This study advocates for enhancing the quality of offered programs, specifically the curricula and courses that boost cognitive skills and critical thinking, in addition to formulating assessment practices and needed teaching quality in response to globalization and neoliberal education. This conclusion assures the impact of globalization and neoliberal education on reform plans.

In the Canadian context, each province is responsible for the quality and accreditation of its own institutions and the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) plays a guiding role in activities related to quality assurance and accreditation, it does not accredit itself. Provinces are responsible for registering Canada private institutions. Canada has no official rankings, but there is a published Maclean's Guide to Canadian Universities annually. It provides transparent information including the positive and negative aspects of each institution and its ranking (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

In 2007, Egypt established the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) as an external accreditation body to guarantee academic quality and institutional effectiveness under the Law No. 82, 2006 and Presidential Decree No. 25, 2007 (OECD, 2010). This was one-step in a reform plan to improve higher educational quality. In order to measure student's attainment of learning outcomes, NAQAAE designed a criterion composed of

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procedures, including examinations and other activities for evaluating academic quality through students' assessment. A given institution follows those procedures to measure the achievement in the planned learning outcomes of a course or a program. Their students need to know the criteria for their assessments and receive structured feedback to support their continued learning. Furthermore, assessments provide the means to rank students based on their performance (NAQAAE, 2004). Zaytoun (2008) asserts that enhancing the higher education system requires not only more resources, but also real potential of improving the educational system and sets reform policies that provide guidelines for students on what to study for their future career. Egypt's adopted accreditation system provides these guidelines to students while also assessing the quality of higher education programs.

### **2.3.4 Governance Approaches**

In the last two decades, the governance of higher education has developed due to the increasing number of institutions, the diversification of their missions, student roles, and the rise of modern public management principles. The consequent difficulties higher education systems face has caused inadequate observations, and most countries launched reform policy plans to revisit higher education mechanisms and governance (Dobbins et al., 2011).

In addition to accreditation, university governance is another area impacted by neoliberal reform. Haug (2009) discusses the concept of decentralized higher education governance. They define the decentralization approach as a normally referring to a move from the center to the periphery (Lauglo, 1995; Karlsen, 2000). The concept of decentralization itself does not provide any information about the strength of the movement. It simply implies the distribution of authority within an institution, such as the national education system, with the word "center" meaning the top in a hierarchical authority structure (Lauglo 1995). Advocates for a decentralized governance approach want to see decision-making power and authority diffused vertically rather than in hierarchal structure.

Haug (2009) notes there are different understandings of decentralization and local management in different countries, which leads to a wide range of decentralization systems. However, in comparative studies, the appropriate unit of analysis is the prevalence of decentralization movements internationally, not the exact

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measures taken nationally to decentralize. Most of the decentralized systems exist in countries that are geographically large, such as Australia, Canada, India and the USA, but may exist in small ones like Switzerland (Bray, 2013).

Some scholars encourage the idea of increasing institutional autonomy, the policy most governments have adopted. They argue adopting a decentralized approach reforms the social policy domain with a positive impact and minimizes the burden of social services financing on the state (Leung, 1994; Guan, 2001). Decentralization advocates claim it supports higher education institutions in becoming more effective and efficient, more responsive to economic imperatives, more productive, and better managed if institutions compete more directly within a market (Goedegebuure & Westerheijden, 1991; Williams, 1992; Dill, 1997; Weiler, 2000; King, 2004; Kogan & Hanney, 2000; McNay, 1999; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Becker, 2008). They also claim the opposite approach, centralization, encourages remote decision making, which in return drives corruption (OCED, 2009).

In Egypt, governance is an issue of concern. The governance of the higher education sector involves two separate frameworks ruled by two separate sets of legislation. The university sector has a governance advisory body known as the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU), chaired by the Minister of Higher Education (MOHE), and independent of the Ministry. MOHE, SCU, and the Council of Private Universities (CPU) operate within a centralized system of governance and management (Abdel Hamid, 2010). The MOHE and SCU handle all major decisions, resulting in a lack of autonomy at the individual institutional level. Based on that, the HEEP project appraisal tackled the issues of institutional freedom, guided strategic planning and resources, limited budgetary discretion, and tight fiscal control over operation and staffing policies. The project had three major goals related to governance reform in higher education: to increase university autonomy, to support consolidation of technical colleges and structure of governance, and to establish the National Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (OECD, 2010).

Generally, the centralized governance system led to restrictive controlled system, which is not effective with the changeable goals of modern education systems, such as expanding education and opening more institutions. It became difficult to achieve the goals of the government, because of the lack of institutional local decisions (World Bank, 2008). According to Said (2001), the “Higher Education



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in Egypt” report tackled the higher education system from all sides, especially in the governance area. Said (2001) states that Egyptian higher education governance and management system suffers from four fundamental deficiencies: the complex legislation and the organization of educational institutions, the absence of internal and external quality assurance, management and strategic planning shortages, lack of funding resources, and the system of budget allocation.

To conclude, based on the advantages of decentralization, higher education sectors around the globe received increased institutional autonomy regarding finances. This occurred at the same time as widespread introduction of national systems and standard procedures to provide evaluation system of the education quality and measure the higher education institutions outcomes, as well as to find other ways towards quality improvements (Vught van, 1993, 1997). One of the challenges facing the Egyptian education system is its highly centralized governance system, which prevents individual institutions from holding decision-making power.

### **2.3.5 Funding Systems**

Financing and governing the funding of higher education are main challenges for higher educational reform in general. Seeking funding resources is a complex process and varies from one country to another. The experiences of developed and developing countries are quite different in terms of the funding challenges they face. Governments are a key source of higher education funding, but most developing countries’ governments encounter a lack of funding resources. In a coordinated market economy, higher education institutions have the tendency to acquire heavy governmental funding, as most believe that keeping tuition fees low enough is a way to guarantee wide learner access (Currie, 2004). Developing governments are unable to assist with funding in the same manner as developed countries, and even in developed countries, the state faces pressure to sustain its higher education system. In Canada, the government offers financial support and grants to learners and programs, which allows for the development of standards and examinations (OECD, 2015).

According to the “Higher Education in Australia” report (2015), the government is the major source of funding, providing around \$15.4 billion of total funding in 2014, in addition to grant payments of about \$10 billion and approximately \$5.5 billion to HELP student loan payments. As presented in the

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OECD analysis, there is a wide range of approaches to tuition fees and public support for students in developed countries. This analysis grouped Australia with Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the UK, and the US, as countries that own well-developed student support systems with quite high tuition fees. On the other hand, OCED (2009) classified countries such as Japan and Korea as having high tuition fees with less developed student support systems. The same Australian report stated that the economic development and structural change are the important drivers for funding.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is a need for more high-skilled workers in the job market, resulting in increased demand for higher education qualifications. Holding such qualifications is becoming the norm rather than the domain of elite. National governments encouraged the trend in several ways, because a highly educated population is essential to compete in a globalized and knowledge-based economy. Therefore, governments have invested political and financial capital in their higher education system as a question of national economic development. Reforming the policies and procedure of higher education funding occurs in response to the overall globalization of higher education and in response to country-specific demographic, financial, and social drivers.

### **2.3.6 Privatization**

Student demographics affect access to universities, and the impact of recent expansion projects plays a critical role globally in increasing access to higher education opportunities. Two sectors offer these opportunities: public and private. Buckner (2013) cites a previous study, which asserted that many private universities offer degrees targeted to the workforce and tend to offer better learning environments and resources to students; in contrast, there is a widespread criticism of overcrowding at public universities, which some have called “unmanageable,” and their facilities are generally found lacking (Lindsey, 2012). They understand the private sector as playing an important role in serving the labor market and extending the capacity of higher education accessibility. The demographics of a country affect the role of private higher education institutions. Egypt’s large youth population led to the adoption of privatization reforms in the 1990s. According to Buckner (2013), the Egyptian higher education system is the largest in the region, and modern reforms have focused on expansion. The government initiated privatization reforms in 1992.

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They expanded privatization policies in 2005 and established a separate university sector governed by market dynamics. However, the benefit of the private sector in higher education reform is extremely debatable, as privatization is associated with the project of neoliberalism and the disassembling of the public sector encouraged by foreign donors such as the World Bank and the IMF (Mazawi, 2010).

These policies were not successful in countering Egypt's demographic challenges. Access to public universities is highly unequal and strongly biased in favor of urban and wealthy youth. These populations gain access to higher education at a greater rate than rural or lower income populations. In the 2009–2010 academic year, more than 2.4 million Egyptian applicants were eligible to join postsecondary institute or university, but only 1.9 million of those joined public universities (CAPMAS, 2011). Academic achievement is the main indicator of HE access in the public sector, and the Egyptian public universities often lag behind privatized counterparts. However, private sector universities rely on private resources and high tuition, which has led to inequality (OECD, 2010).

On the other hand, Canada has a highly accessible public system that recorded the highest participation rates. This is a major reason why Canada has the most educated populations in the globe. It is a success story of a highly decentralized and largely uncoordinated network of multiple systems. Canada boasts respected university and college sectors and high levels of educational attainment, as well as leading research universities (Jones, 2014). Despite advocates for the privatization of education, the Canadian model presents a successful alternative reform model focused on public universities.

### **2.3.7 University Programs and Practices**

Various studies tackled updating existing programs, creating new programs and designing modern curriculums. The updating process is continuous. According to Amin (2008), institutions need to reassess their curriculum periodically to keep up with changes and trends and avoid passing outdated knowledge and competencies onto students. Brand III (2005) also asserts the need to frequently revise and update curriculum design to meet learners' needs in the changing job market. Concerned parties agree that this process is necessary, but this study argues the process needs to include a strategic plan to achieve the required results. This minimizes the time period

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over which changes are implemented and requires less funding. Preparing university graduates for the job market includes both professional skills and soft skills to enhance employability.

The Human Development Report of 2010 discusses the issues of Egyptian youth and how to build a better future. One of the main challenges that face Egyptian youth is high unemployment rates for graduates who enter the job market for the first time. It has become a source of great concern to the government, leading the nation to exert intensive efforts to repair the mismatch between higher education institutions and job market requirements. According to this report, the higher education system reforms include the introduction of pedagogical practices that promote career skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, along with respect for the fundamental values of tolerance and openness (Human Development Report, 2010). Another challenge facing Egypt is the transition process for students moving from secondary education to higher education and joining the new educational system in universities. The process of accessing higher education is a very competitive process based on students' scores in the General Secondary Education Final Level Examination (Thanaweya Amma). This process does not correctly place students according to their capabilities nor does it predict their future academic performance (OECD, 2010). Indeed, without a system that assesses students' academic preparation, students who enter higher education risk not performing well or failing to attain job market skills, even with updated curriculum.

Canada has also attempted to update higher education curriculum towards job market skills. One of the most recent reforms is Advanced Vocational Education (AVE), a new form of vocational higher education tailored to job market needs. Employers and higher education providers designed, constructed and carried out new initiatives in partnerships (CHEPS, 2011). Canada has updated its current course offerings through private-public partnerships between economic actors and high education providers. To sum up, definitely, countries that are swift to adapt with the global knowledge and job market needs succeed economically. The international community conceptualizes required improvements as applying the best performing education systems according to the international standards that provide the benchmark for success (OECD, 2010).

### **2.3.8 Job Market and Skills of Higher Education Graduates**

As countries became increasingly aware of the critical role of matching higher education outcomes with job market requirements, it is significant that in several OECD countries shifted to job market framing within the higher education sector (Clark, 1998; Jongbloed, 2003). Constantly, producing a pool of well-prepared individuals attractive for regional organizations leads universities to a role in professional development, in cooperation with industry and professional concerned organizations. Knowledge intensive business chooses the location for their business based on access to qualified jobholders. Universities are increasingly offering tailored programs for professional organizations (OECD, 2010). Internationally, unemployment rates fall among individuals holding higher education qualifications. Therefore, unemployment rates can measure the relevance between the education outcomes and the skills demanded in the job market (OECD, 2010).

However, further studies indicate that there are particular employability skills required by employers to match with job market demands. In this regard, the university certificate alone is insufficient to ensure employment. In general, those employability skills help individuals to join the market easily and successfully. Scholars define those skills as "core skills, generic skills, non-technical skills, and/or soft skills" (Blom & Saeki, 2010). Employer engagement is now an effective way to enhance the relationship between higher education and the job market. For employers, the partnership ensures they hire well-prepared graduates. In turn, educational institutions ensure their graduates receive jobs (CHEPS, 2011).

Higher education should assist learners in developing their skills and abilities to engage in the job market. Methods and qualifications will enrich field-specific skills. Job market relevance starts with teaching bachelor's and master's degree holders how to work autonomously and gain the capacity for acquiring knowledge independently and proactively to find solutions for new problems (CHEPS, 2011).

In Australia, a report about employability skills in higher education sector generated by the Australian Precision Consultancy Project Team (2007) states that the eight most common global employability skills are (pp.72):

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Communication and interpersonal skills	Planning and organizing,
Ability to work in groups and teamwork	Technology background
Problem solving	Ability for life-long learning
Self-management skills	Initiative and enterprise skills.

These are the skills that the potential graduate employees need to attain after completing their higher education studies (Cleary et.al, 2007).

Although, the major goal of the higher education system is to produce well-equipped graduates able to join the job market as experienced employees and entrepreneurs nationally and globally, there are factors that restrain this main pursuit (World Bank, 2010). The major factors that restrain people from obtaining quality of education rather than quantity are (1) the centralized governance system, (2) the poor-quality of curriculums and programs, (3) the overfull classrooms, (4) the shortage of funds, (5) teaching quality and other factors. As discussed above, institutions of higher education actively enact reforms to address these risks factors. However, the reforms are not always sufficient or successful.

### **2.3.9 Higher Education Institutions and the Job Market**

Quality assurance and accreditation has increasingly become a structural tool to close the gap between higher education and the job market. For example, the representation of employers and practitioners in quality assurance processes is strengthened to ensure that employable skills will be included in all offered programs. This is an effective way to fulfill job market needs in Australia (CHEPS, 2011).

Higher education institutions are tackling multiple factors to work on learners, teaching, research, and grants, as well as funding systems. Additionally, they struggle for external funding to gain market-related activities. This is in addition to seeking additional governmental funding (Williams, 1997). Recently, the concept of market-framing not only refers to connecting higher education closer to business and industry, but also to restructuring higher education institutions as a business organization (Cowen, 1991). Becker (2008) emphasizes that in order to survive in an increasingly competitive environment, higher education institutions seek opportunities to develop a closer relationship with business and job market. Additionally, another Egyptian case study by Bremer & El Baradei (2008) assesses the gaps between the demand of employers and the capabilities of master's holders

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with regard to employability skills and provides an analysis by dividing the employability skills into three categories: analytic, external relating to communication, and managerial competencies. Furthermore, the International Economic Organization (ILO) issued a report in 2011 indicating that decent work deficits are one of the job market's main challenges in the Arab World. For example, in Egypt, the schools, universities, and vocational education and training institutions are turning out graduates lacking the skills needed in competitive the job markets (ILO, 2011).

### **2.3.10 Impact of Higher Education on Development**

The relationship between higher education and development is best understood through Vessuri's work. To summarize Vessuri (1988)'s point of view, higher education has to be harmonious with national aims, personal willingness and competence to contribute to societies, and social and economic development. Failing to provide education also fails to address job market needs. In fact, political leaders understand that human resource development is key to a country's future. Future higher education should produce a pool of technical, scientific, industrial, managerial and entrepreneurial individuals ready to enter the workforce. Many countries understand higher education's major role in national economic development and restructuring. In Australia, for example, the country has faced an adverse balance of payments and a growing national debt. When they restructured their higher education, their major aim was to make their system more central to economic reconstruction. The assumption succeeded, and Australia prospered as a nation, leading to be changes in attitudes, practices, and processes in all sectors and at all levels of the national community. Not all educational reforms lead to societal development. While some scholars provide that obtaining high quality of education increases the mobility of individuals, which can subsequently help in national development as well, this is not always the case. If the country is only concerned about quantity rather than quality, this will lead to contrary results (Brand III, 2005). The higher education system must play a leading role in promoting changes but needs to pursue certain reforms to succeed.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Comparison Methods

In order to answer the study questions, this study depends on secondary data sources and the method of employing a comparative analysis among three countries (Australia, Canada and Egypt) despite their contextual and regional differences employing Bereday's four-step method (Bereday, 1964). Bereday's four-step method of analysis is consisting of description, interpretation, juxtaposition, and simultaneous comparison (Figure (3.1)).

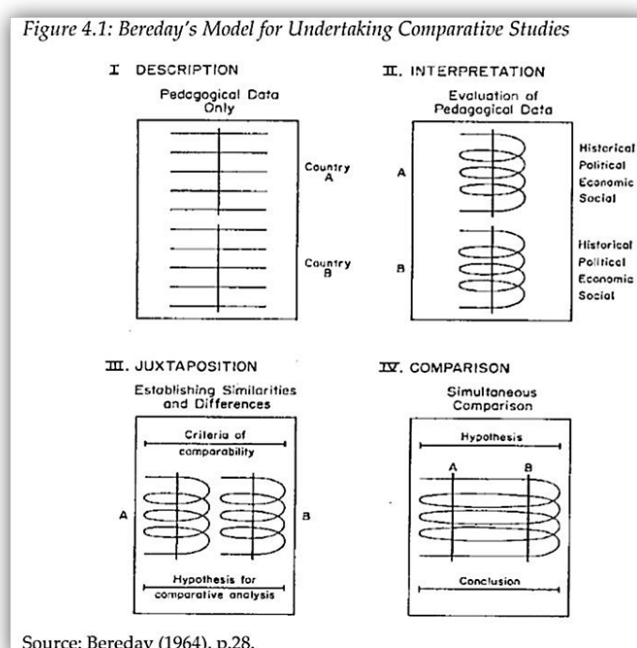


Figure (3.1): A Bereday's Model for comparative Studies (Source: Bray, 2014, P. 99).

Phillips (2006) defines Bereday's model of comparative analysis to include four phases, as follows (p. 100):

Step One: Description phase addressing the features of the selected higher education system with full attention to historical, geographical, socio-economic, and cultural contexts. This will facilitate studying all those national factors that influence the educational system of each of the three countries. Step Two: Interpretation phase to evaluate and analyze the data presented in the description phase, as interpretation of social, political, economic and historical data is essential to understanding similarities and differences found in the educational systems of the three countries. Step Three: Juxtaposition phase to postulate explanations for differences or similarities in light of their contexts. This allows the researcher to conclude the



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lessons learned. Step Four: Simultaneous comparison phase to draw comparison conclusion and discuss the lessons learned through revisiting the concepts previously discussed (Phillips, 2006).

### **3.2 Study Design and Structure**

To employ Bereday's model of analysis, this study follows his suggested six sequential stages. First, the study defines the educational concepts that emerged in the last decade to introduce the study's conceptual framework. Second, the researcher describes the features of higher education in Australia, Canada, and Egypt, as well as explores the three countries' socio-economic, cultural and historical contexts. Third, the study explores the higher education major policy reform initiatives during the last decade in each country to cover reform plans and results. Fourth, the study draws comparisons between the three countries by exploring the aspects of their modern higher education reform and initiatives towards educational quality improvements. Fifth, this study uses these comparative findings to postulate the similarities and differences between the three countries. Sixth, the study highlights the lessons learned from these countries' reform journeys and finally, concludes with recommendations to contribute in reforming policies and practices in Egypt. Statistical evidences support a clear description and explanation for the relationship between study components. The study analyzes the higher education policy reform of the three countries through a qualitative method. It uses data analysis to build a case for conclusion to facilitate the comparisons (Freeman et al., 2007).

The six-staged design of this comparative study is shown in figure (3.2) which illustrates Bereday's structure of comparative inquiry (Phillips, 2006).

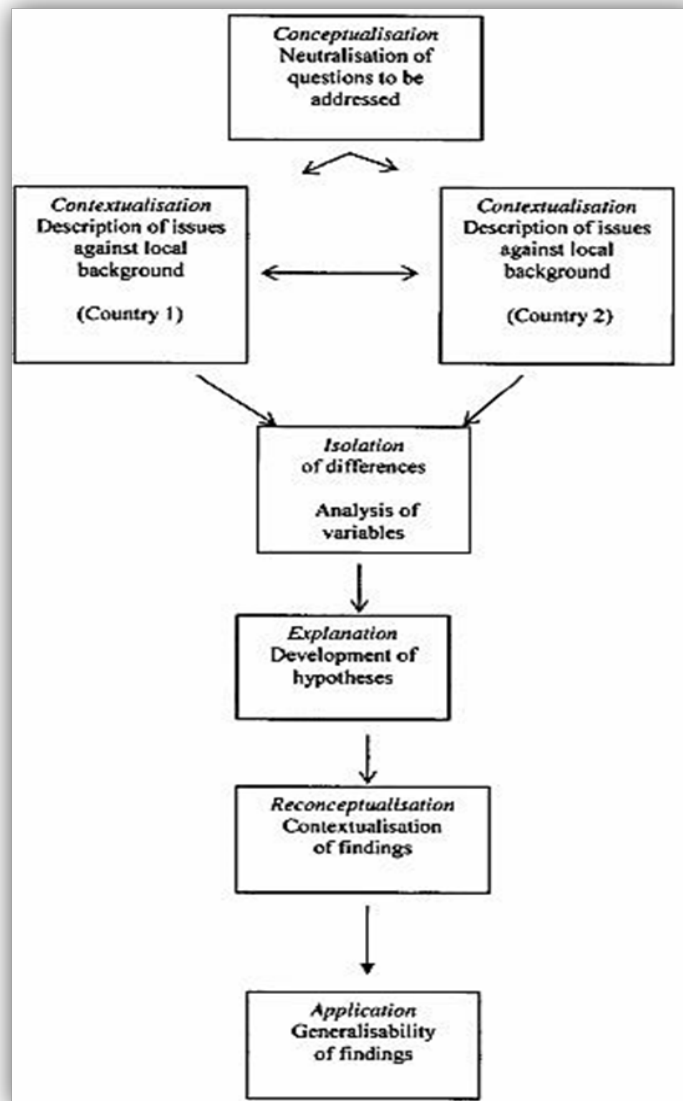


Figure (3.2): A structure for comparative inquiry proposed by Bereday  
Source: Phillips, 2006, p. 316

This approach offers a possible structure for comparative inquiry (Figure (3.2)) and it suggests a systematic procedure for comparisons. The structure pays attention to the essential requirements of proper conceptual analysis of a problem and isolates of variables after a thorough study of context, the development of theories based on attempts at explanation, a revisiting of the conceptual analysis based on the findings, and finally a consideration of any applicability of the findings (Phillips, 2006).

### 3.3 Comparison Stages

Based on the above discussion, the study includes six sequential stages:

- **Stage One:** Outlining the study's conceptual framework and explores essential concepts and related theories and definitions.
- **Stage Two:** Describing the contextual framework and the higher education system, while paying attention to the three selected countries on the historical, socio-economic and cultural dynamics. This follows comparative descriptive and interpretive steps with purpose to understand the educational outcomes of higher education reforms in the selected countries (Bray, 2014).
- **Stage Three:** Exploring higher education major policy reforms in the three selected countries, including challenges, initiatives and reform plans, and outcomes.
- **Stage Four:** Comparing higher education reforms in Australia, Canada, and Egypt in order to address problems and identify similarities and differences.
- **Stage Five:** Assessing findings in light of the similarities and differences isolated from the comparative analysis in order to come up with the lessons learned.
- **Stage Six:** Discussing lessons learned from the comparative analysis and conclude study recommendations for reforming Egyptian HE policies and practices.

### 3.4 Limitation

This study relies on external reports generated through trusted bodies concerned with higher education as well as on scholarly publications. There are sufficient banks of available information on higher education systems by individual governments, organizations like UNESCO, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the European Union. However, depending only on data and statistical evidences in describing and analyzing higher education features in the selected counties is a limitation. A second limitation pertains to the language of instruction between the three countries. Canada is a bilingual country that uses English and French in documentation. Lack of English literature about Canada was an issue, as was the lack of access to contemporary literatures about Egypt.

## **Chapter Four: Context and Higher Education Reforms**

In accordance with the six-staged comparative study methodology, Chapter Four tackles two important stages: Stage two discusses the contextual framework, and stage three explores higher education major policy reforms in the three countries. This Chapter answers the first study question: “What are the historical and socio-economic contexts of higher education in Australia, Canada and Egypt?” It also addresses the second study question, “What are the main higher education reform initiatives undertaken by Australia, Canada and Egypt during the last decade?” According to Phillips (2006), the contextual framework begins by describing the features of higher educational system, including historical, geographical, socio-economic, and cultural contexts in the three countries in order to assess the national factors influencing the educational system of each country.

Definitely, it is essential for any comparative study to establish the parameters for initial comparability of the chosen units of analysis. Accordingly, analysis can occur when the compared units have sufficient in common for meaningful analysis of their similarities and differences (Bray, 2004). The units of analysis used in comparing Australia, Canada, and Egypt are universities and institutions, academic programs, governance approach, funding of higher education, privatization, qualifications degrees, admissions qualifications, access and equity, quality in higher education, international education and training, distance learning and online education, and job market and skills of graduates.

Discussing historical and socio-economic contexts provides practical lessons that clarify importance and development trends; in addition, it helps analyzing present-day phenomena and culture. Each subsection focuses on one of the country’s higher education reforms over the past decades, as well as the national context.

### **4.1 Australia: Historical and Socio-Economic Contexts and Higher Education**

#### **4.1.1 Overview of Australia**

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional democracy consisting of a federation of six states (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia) and two territories (the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory). The country is located in Oceania, a continent between the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific Ocean. Australia is one of the largest

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countries geographically but is relatively sparsely populated. As of 2015, the population of Australia is approximately 24,319,400 and makes up 0.3% of the world's populations (NAD-UE, 2015). English is the official language of the country, and Canberra is the capital city. The city is located in the Australian Capital Territory and situated inland between the two largest cities: Sydney in New South Wales, and Melbourne in Victoria. Australia's population is diverse and about 23% were born outside Australia. The rate of annual population growth is 1.2%, and about 22% of the population is foreign born or holds a foreign nationality (ABS, 2012). The majority of Australians live in the main coastal cities and regional centers (Jongbloed, 2008).

Recently, Australia's economy has flourished. The economy has grown while simultaneously maintaining low inflation rates and high employment statistics. The Australian GDP has steadily increased over the last 15 years, from \$485.04 billion in 1990 to reach \$734.21 billion in 2003 (Jongbloed, 2008). The unemployment rate in 2006 was about 5%, and the comparatively higher average weekly earnings of a person holding a degree or diploma indicates the advantages of higher education. Graduate employment is quite high, with 81% of graduates finding work within four months of their date of graduation. The growth of the Australian economy has particularly benefitted those with the highest levels of educational attainment. Historically speaking, Australia accrued wealth based on its natural resources: primary products, minerals, and agriculture. Much of the national wealth comes from minerals, and Australia has enjoyed strong economic growth based largely on mineral exports to China and Japan (Jongbloed, 2008). Beginning in the 1980s, however, government and industry deliberately attempted to switch the basis of the state's economy from primary products to knowledge. One prime minister described the country's intention to create a "Clever Country." The Australia historically relied on natural resource extraction, particularly mineral extraction, as the cornerstone of its economy, but in recent decades, the government has shifted to a knowledge economy.

### **Multiculturalism in Australia**

Australia provides a hospitable environment that accepts multiculturalism and paves the way for those living abroad to settle in there. In 2011, the Australian government launched a public campaign on multiculturalism with the slogan "Multiculturalism: United, Strong, and Successful". The governmental commitment

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to multiculturalism in Australia helps in setting priorities and strategies for the future. The country encourages people's independence and participation in the community. The government believes that all Australians share benefits and responsibilities that emerge from the diverse cultures, languages, and religions of Australian society. The country designed a system to provide helpful information on life in Australia for all migrants, families of migrants, refugees, and humanitarian entrants (DSS, 2016).

### **Australian Political System**

The Australian government is a liberal democratic political system that embraces respectable and diverse religious affiliations and liberal communication and association. The British and North American systems influenced Australian institutions and practices; however, the Australian model is unique. The Commonwealth of Australia was established in 1901 and the country's constitution framed the Australian system of government. In Australia's federal governance systems, the powers of the Commonwealth are limited to areas of national importance (Jongbloed, 2008). The six former British colonies on the Australian continent became the six states comprising independent Australia.

The country also has a royal system, in which Australia's queen or king acts as the head of state with limited authority as indicted in the Constitution. Australia's current head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of the United Kingdom. In actuality, the queen is merely a figurehead who has no real governance role within the political system. In Australia, the queen appoints a formal representative known as "Governor General" to perform duties without interference from the queen (DSS, 2016).

### **Australian Economic Situation**

According to Focus Economics, the Australian economy continues to perform strongly at the end of 2017, and customer and business confidence and occupation growth remain high. Focus Economics expects the Australian economic growth increasing to 3% by 2018. Due to its remote geographic location, Australia is physically detached from the main international markets. However, the country has integrated into global markets with the help of sound policies. A crucial component of Australia's economic and demographic growth is its immigration and externalized visa systems. While Australia struggles with inequality, this is connected to the larger

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process of globalization. The government addresses inequality by improving labor market skills and offering paths for underprivileged people to join career life (Focus Economics, 2017). Latest marks of investment are positive and point to a rebalancing of the economy away from the primary sector with a strong labor market. Australia's robust education system heavily affects its economic development.

### **4.1.2 Australian Education System**

Since 1997, Australia has been considered as an exporter of education, and its education services are ranked ninth internationally (Jongbloed, 2008). The country's demographics explain its role as an education exporter. A quarter of Australian higher education learners are from other countries, and upon graduation, they make a great contribution to the Australian economy, their country of origin's economy, and regional economies. This, in turn, creates greater international demand for Australian degrees.

### **Primary and Secondary Education**

Australia offers a one-year, non-compulsory pre-school education program. There are both public and private pre-school programs, generally for children between the ages of three and five. The programs have a similar structure across Australia and might differ depending on the state or territory. Primary school education consists of thirteen years and is divided into four levels: (1) A preparatory year that is not compulsory but almost universally undertaken, (2) Primary schooling (six or seven years), (3) Secondary schooling (five or six years), and (4) Senior secondary education (Years 11 and 12). Education is compulsory until the age of 15 or 16. Finalizing year 12 means that the student has finished 13 years of education. After that, students who want to continue their education have to join tertiary programs, which are highly specialized to offer intensive study at an advanced level. The student's tertiary entrance score, rank or index determines the entry to higher education. Accordingly, each state or territory has Tertiary Admissions Centers to coordinate admission to the universities in that state. The tertiary entrance subjects assess common learning outcomes; however, the subjects covered vary by state and territory (Jongbloed, 2008). In brief, students seeking admission to higher education are provided with a tertiary entrance score or rank to determine their future education.

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Additionally, individual universities may have further requirements for admission to specific studies.

### **4.1.3 Australian Higher Education System**

Australia's higher education system is comprised of universities and institutions that play an important role in powering innovation, driving productivity, and enriching students with the required skills for future success. Higher education qualifications are essential to engage in Australian professional career life. The Australian government supports higher education through policies, funding, and programming. Improving higher education makes an essential contribution to the economic future of the country, as well as the country's cultural and social development. The stated role of the education sector is to educate the country's potential workforce, develop country's potential leaders, provide jobs for Australians, facilitate cultural and trade links with other countries, and contribute in widening knowledge and innovation based economy (Probert, 2015).

Australian postsecondary education includes higher education and the Vocational Education and Training (VET). VET is the vocational and technical education within the senior secondary curriculum that provides students alternatives to traditional higher education. Some VET institutions offer associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, graduate certificates and graduate diplomas. VET connects schools, postsecondary institutions, and the workplace. All VET providers must be a registered training organization (Jongbloed, 2008). Australian national law provides for a higher education governance body that reports to the Australian Government Minister for Education, Science and Training before it can receive grants or its students can receive assistance from the Australian Government under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). Education providers are subject to quality and accountability requirements (Jongbloed, 2008). Today, the post-secondary education in Australia consists of universities and other higher education institutions that include Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges (NAD-UE, 2015). Postsecondary education providers receive funding from the Australian Government, whether they categorized under public or private sectors, and their institutions are either self-accrediting or not accredited yet. Principally, self-accrediting institutions include universities that offer academic degrees and qualifications. However, the



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other system, referred to as “non-self-accrediting,” consists of institutions accredited by state or territory authorities (ABS, 2012). Non-self-accrediting universities include all private higher education institutions listed in the Register of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). The AQF Register contains information about the recognition status of institutions and the qualifications they award. The development of the Australian higher education originates with the Oxford and Cambridge models and their concentration on liberal academic principals. Modern Australian universities combine the British and American educational systems. A wide and diverse university system developed to meet the market requirements, due to urgent need for a highly educated technical and professional workforce (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Historical Background of Australian Higher Education**

The University of Sydney, established in 1850 in New South Wales, was the first Australian university. Subsequently, Australian universities were founded in three of the original colonies: University of Melbourne in 1853 in Victoria, University of Adelaide in 1874 in South Australia, and University of Tasmania in 1890 in Tasmania. By 1912, there was a university in each of independent Australia’s states: University of Adelaide in 1874, University of Tasmania in 1890, University of Queensland in 1909, and University of Western Australia in 1911.

At the time of the creation of the Australian Federation, the country’s population was 3.8 million, of which 2,652 were university students. In the period after the WWII, Australia witnessed great higher education expansion. Enrolment increased by 30,000 and participation rates doubled. By 1960, there were ten universities educating 53,000 students. Higher education expansion continued throughout the 1960s, at which point enrolment once again doubled. (Jongbloed, 2008). The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the reform of university management structures and governance. After the completion of the Martin Committee Report in the early 1960s, Australia established a binary higher education system including universities with research and degree education and colleges of advanced education (CAE) to offer vocational education up to a diploma degree (Jongbloed, 2008). The Commonwealth undertook full responsibility for funding higher education in 1974. By 1985, there were nearly 65 higher education institutions: 19 universities and 46 CAEs. In the late 1980s, Australia established the Unified National System to erase the distinction between universities and CAEs and minimize the number of higher

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education institutions. This processes successfully reduced the number of institutions, and in 1997, Australia had 37 public universities with 654,694 students (Jongbloed, 2008).

Australia's federal government played a significant role in orienting university activities towards serving market needs and increasing student enrolment. To organize institutions' finances, the government initiated a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for national students, as well as the international students' courses with full fees. In 1986, Australia allowed universities to open additional sources of revenue through receiving full fees from overseas students. In 1988, John Dawkins, then Australia's Labor Minister, announced a large-scale reform of higher education system and its finances (Dawkins 1988).

This reform process continued into the 1990s, when the Australian government introduced e fee-paying postgraduate courses for domestic students. Starting from 1996 and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Prime Minister Howard Government's higher education reform agenda affected the higher education system. During his administration, the government began reforms to Australia's research and innovation system. These reforms addressed teaching and learning, governance, funding, research, and quality of education (Jongbloed, 2008). In 2003, the *Higher Education Support Act of 2003* replaced *the Higher Education Funding Act of 1989* as the central domestic legislation for higher education governance. In 2004, Australia developed the Research Quality Framework (RQF) as the basis for enhanced assessment of the quality and impact of publicly funded research. The regulation of universities and implementation of government's reform packages remain ongoing until today. Most recently, the government announced an initiative to bring Australian universities backing to future by establishing deregulated higher education system and modern student financing systems under the Higher Education Loan Scheme (HELP). The program allows Australian students and permanent humanitarian visa holders' eligibility to receive loans and join higher education. In 2014, the number of the enrolled students in higher education was about 1.4 million and approximately 350,000 of them were international students (Source: AEI (2006) & Country Education Profiles Australia 2006). In short, Australia spent a lot of time and exerted remarkable efforts to reform its higher education system and facilitate access to higher education.

### Languages Used in Education

The official language of instruction in Australia is English.

### Governance Approach

The Australian federal system, state and territorial governments, and local government are all accountable for education and training. Australian higher education institutions combine external and internal governance and oversight. External agencies oversee aspects of the regulation system, such as registration and course accreditation. Table (4.1) summarizes the responsibilities of each agency (NAD-UE, 2015).

Table (4.1): Summary of Education Agencies and Their Responsibilities

Agency of regulation	Agency Title	Responsibility
TEQSA	the independent, national regulatory and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector	Regulates the higher education sector
ASQA	the interdependent, national regulator for Australia's VET sector	Regulates the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector (Excluding some states).
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students	Regulates all providers that attract overseas students including schools for primary and secondary education, are required to meet The essential conditions to be registered on CRICOS.
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	AQF is the national policy for regulated qualifications from the higher education sector the school-leaving certificate including the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. AQF combines the qualifications into a single comprehensive national framework.

Source: NAD-UE, 2015. p.11

Nowadays, approximately 50% of higher education providers are dual or multi-sector providers, meaning they operate across more than one higher education sphere. Accordingly, TEQSA and ASQA regulate their VET delivery. Moreover, the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) requires all education providers and courses that enroll overseas students register on CRICOS (NAD-UE, 2015).

### Universities and Institutions

In Australia, the higher education system consists of Australian public universities, affiliated branches of overseas universities under public sector, and private sector non-university higher education providers (NUHEPs). For the time being, there are 172 registered higher education providers including 37 public Australian universities, 3 private Australian universities, 1 private university of

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specialization, 2 overseas universities, and 129 NUHEP (DET, 2015). In 2007, the higher education system education sector in Australia consisted of universities and other higher education institutions, of which 40 out of 44 institutions received Commonwealth funding either on a three-year basis or on a contract basis. Despite the number of private universities, public universities dominate the Australian system (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Academic Programs**

Australian universities are comprehensive institutions offering a wide range of programs. They vary in size, ranging from 40,000 students to 2,000 students. Many universities are located in the major cities but there are some in the regional areas. Universities offer both academic and professional education. The term “professional education” refers to degree level awards qualifying the holder to practice in a profession such as architecture, dentistry, engineering, law, medicine, social work and veterinary science. Modern universities have added more *vocational* programs or *professional* programs, such as business, management, design, hospitality and tourism (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Funding of Higher Education**

In Australia, education and training initially fall under the responsibility of state or territorial governments. State and territorial governments had more legislative responsibility until the establishment of TEQSA. Now, the federal government is the party responsible for funding the higher education. In 2014, the Government provided about \$15.4 billion in direct funding, in addition to \$10 billion for grants and approximately \$5.5 billion for HELP student loan (DET, 2015). The Australian government only offers funding to the institutions that meet their quality standards. State and territorial governments are responsible for administering the VET programs in their areas, including the responsibilities to plan, allocate funds to public and private providers, set tuition fees, and administer governing institutions under the Technical and Further Education (TAFEs). The Australian Department of Education and Training is responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality and affordable childcare, including kids’ education, school education, post-school, higher education, international education, and academic research (DET, 2015).

**HELP Loans:** The Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) offers income-contingent loans to eligible students for their tuition fees. Eligible students are Australian citizens or permanent residents from disadvantaged backgrounds interested in pursuing higher education. Loans depend on student's qualification degree and provide differentiated loan schemes. A summary of the available HELP loans is presented in table (4.2) as follows:

Table (4.2): Australian HELP Schemes of Loans

HELP scheme	Description
HECS-HELP	Loans eligible Commonwealth supported students
FEE-HELP	Loans for eligible fee-paying students.
Other loan types	Cover VET students, services and amenities and overseas study expenses.

Source: Jongbloed, 2008, p.51

### **Privatization**

In Australia, private education institutions operate in parallel with public institutions at all education stages. There are private schools associated with the various religions, including the Catholic church, other Christian denominations, Judaism, and Islam or educational philosophies, such as Montessori or Steiner. Despite being private institutions, these schools fall under the responsibility of the state or territorial training authorities. Private sector institutions register with the state or territorial education department and are subject to regular inspection procedures. Private institutions receive funding from tuition fees, donations, and financial assistance from both the Australian and the state or territorial governments. Both public and private sectors use the same curriculum and follow the governmental regulations in terms of environment and teacher registration (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Qualifications Degrees**

The Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) lists the academic degrees offered in terms of qualification levels for doctoral degrees, master's degree, graduate diploma, graduate certificate, bachelor's degree, associate degree, advanced diploma, and diploma. The AQF defines qualifications and indicates the typical volume of learning required in terms of years of full-time study. Each institution has its own accreditation system to represent the quantitative load of a program of study. This leads to considerable institutional differences. For example, a Bachelor Degree may

require a total of 24 credits at one institution and 600 credits at another (Probert, 2015).

### **Admissions Qualifications**

Admission to a higher education programs is premised on the completion of full secondary education (Year 12). Commonly, the admission process occurs based on the tertiary entrance ranking compiled after students pass an exam at the secondary education stage. Students are scored or ranked, and in some cases referred to universities' admissions index according to their secondary education performance. The admission process also includes requirements to complete entry exam and relevant bridging courses and the recognition of previous learning experience in professions related to the field of study (ABS, 2012).

### **Access and Equity**

The key factors determining the capacity of Australians to access higher education are the overall size of the higher education sector relative to the Australian population, and the distribution of locations across states and Territories. Student demand consistently exceeds the supply of higher education institutions, although the extent of demand varies from year to year. In determining realistic estimates of eligible applicants not able to obtain an undergraduate position, the AVCC discounts the total gross applicant figures, by taking into account factors such as less qualified applicants, double counting of interstate eligible applicants, or the number of preferences expressed by applicants and the rate of offer rejection by successful applicants. The discounted figures offer a more realistic measure of higher education demand not met by the current system. By using the corrected figures, AVCC estimates the realistic number of unsuccessful applicants to range between 8% and 11% in 2003, as compared to 6% and 9% in 2002 (Jongbloed, 2008). In Australia, equity has always been an issue of concern, and the government expresses a desire for equity in their slogan: "A fair go." In 1990, the Commonwealth confirmed these concerns in a paper entitled "A Fair Chance for All". Australia struggles to provide social justice and equal rights to all Australians, especially equal access to higher education opportunities, which leads to differential rates of access to higher education. However, expansion of distance learning enables many students in employment to enhance their qualifications (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Quality in Higher Education**

Australian higher education system seeks to demonstrate the quality of its teaching and learning, and to assure the students of the value of their growing investment in the sector. Certainly, this process involves complex quality standards and quality measurement processes. Australia has a strong history of formulating quality assurance system for higher education. Currently, the country pays extensive attention to developing a modern quality system that is more flexible and capable of enhancing the capacity of poor-quality providers and supporting their educational quality system until receiving the accreditation. The new quality era focuses on quality improvement and innovation, as well as promoting professors and teachers in order to boost learning outputs (DET, 2015).

### **Accreditation**

The term ‘university’ is a legal term formulated by legislation. State or territorial legislations establish universities following a standard assessment of their academic and financial credentials. Universities can self-accredit, as they are authorized to accredit their own courses and responsible for their academic standards. Practicing autonomy is one of the criteria for registration as a university in Australia (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Quality Assurance**

The quality assurance system for higher education differs between states. The government began to encourage universities to monitor their own performance in 1970s. Then, in 1980’s, the focus sharpened to include the improvement of education efficiency and effectiveness. In 1991, the Commonwealth moved from the discipline review approach to an approach that emphasized quality assurance of the institution as a whole. The following year, the Commonwealth established the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education to play a role in providing advice on quality assurance issues, conducting independent audits of institutional quality policies and procedures, and presenting recommendations about the allocation of annual quality funds (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **International Education and Training**

Internationally, Australia is competitive in providing education and training both in Australia and for students abroad, termed overseas students or international

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students who undertake the same programs as Australian students. In 2005, there were 344,815 overseas students studying in Australia, with the majority coming from China, India, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, United States of America, and Singapore. There was also a remarkable increase in the number of students coming from South America and the Middle East (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Distance Learning and Online Education**

Most Australian programs are available on either a full-time or a part-time basis. In the last two decades, the programs offered through distance learning, online education through the internet have grown rapidly, and in some cases, institutions began to offer programs outside of Australia (Jongbloed, 2008).

### **Job Market and Skills of Graduates**

The impact of neoliberal ideology on Australian higher education spans two decades. Australian universities have institutionalized the global language of accountability, quality assurance, performance management, customers, and stakeholders. However, there are always factors that pushback against globalization, such as academic cultures at departmental level or academic boards where the frontrunners are powerfully represented (Probert, 2015). Australian leaders believe that graduate employability is essential to economic and market success. Accordingly, the Australian Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda emphasize the need for improved and widespread market-higher education cooperation for future innovation. The establishment of "Ai Group" is a method to increase market dialogue with a range of relevant higher education stakeholders, encourage action, support companies through its employer guide for future graduates, and offer its employment services to new graduates (Willox, 2016).

#### **4.1.4 Higher Education Policy Reform in Australia**

The Australian government issued in 2008 a report entitled "Review of Australian Higher Education" to discuss all aspects of higher education in Australia. This report highlighted the status of higher education, challenges to overcome, and their plans and strategies. They envisioned the need for an outstanding, internationally competitive higher education system. Indeed, the effectiveness of any quality system depends on the strong and efficient relationship between responsible



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parties and the effectiveness of its regulatory process, which leads to healthy institutional cultures and institutional commitment to evaluating the quality system. Australia underwent two main policy reform journeys: the policy reform in 2009 to improve higher education performance and the policy reform in 2013 to improve quality of education (Coombe, 2015).

### **Policy Reform in 2009**

In response to an array of globalized pressures and government policy changes, Australia launched the 2009 reform plans to modernize the higher education and improve its performance (Coombe, 2015).

### **Analysis of Sector Situation Prior to 2009**

Australian higher education system went through changes in the late 1980s following radical policy reforms enacted by the Australian Commonwealth. The government aimed to reform education policy by establishing a unified national higher education system in Australia. This process is known as “Dawkins reforms.” The changes to education policy reforms implemented under Minister John Dawkins sought to increase diversity in Australian higher education. However, they had the unintended consequences of launching large-scale higher education governance reform (Croucher & Woelert, 2015). Liberal democracy has long advocated for radical policy reform, leading to far-reaching structural reorganization on national levels (Croucher & Woelert, 2015). Gavin Moodie (2013) states that there is no evidence the higher education expansion launched by the Dawkins reforms reduced system quality. In the Australian context, higher education witnessed a shift from viewing higher education as attainable only for the elite, to a human right owed to all community members and an objective for national development. The 2009 reform vision depended on this change in mindset in particular (Coombe, 2015).

### **Policy Reform Agenda – May 2009**

One of the most important reform plans in Australia, the reform launched in May 2009 with an aim of transforming Australia’s higher education system policy, outlined a comprehensive reform agenda for the following 10 years. (Australian Government, 2009:5) The policy reform agenda concentrated on achieving the goals of equity and quality outcomes through a single policy that:

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- 1- Transforms the scale, potential and quality of all universities.
- 2- Paves the way of a modern era of Australian higher education.
- 3- Ensures all Australians have the opportunity to develop and reach their potential.
- 4- Improves research as a mechanism to contribute to country development.
- 5- Enhances higher education quality to remains 'globally competitive' (Australian Government, 2009).

The policy outlined that all Australians deserve the chance to enrich their skills and widen their knowledge to effectively participate in society, including improved access and educational outcomes for students from low socio-economic areas. This would improve social participation and hence boost their social and economic conditions (Coombe, 2015).

### **Objectives of 2009 Policy Reform**

The government framed its reform policy by marketing the Australian higher education as having a competitive advantage and encouraging the participation rate in order to develop the country in the long term. In 2009, the Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, announced the government's target of having 40% of Australian youth obtain a bachelor degree or higher by 2025. This announcement extended the reform's timeframe by 5 years (Gillard, 2009). The government was aware that increasing the numbers of students would definitely affect the system and envisioned several challenges, including the need to expand infrastructure and support services to enable student participation (Birrell & Edwards, 2009 & Rubin, 2012). However, they anticipated this expansion would take time to put in place. These considerations reflect principles of equity, participation, and access understood within the social analysis framework (Althaus et al, 2013).

### **Challenges and Issues Facing Policy Reform in Australia**

There are a number of challenges associated with the reform policies undertaken by the Australian government. First, the government justified the social equity agenda with arguments on ethical and humanitarian dimensions; however, it ignored the financially rewarding aspects of education. Universities will gain the most from incentives to increase student enrolments. Second, the quality measures, which were regulatory and coercive in nature, drew criticism from within the education

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sector. Research-based universities, in particular, were concerned that performance-based funding, associated with target achievements, would jeopardize quality (Coombe, 2015). In their eyes, this amounted to government meddling and over-regulation. Finally, there were gaps between the proposed benchmarks and government attainment. Achieving these agendas remains the challenge for forthcoming policy-makers, because generally the sector agreed in principle with the need to achieve both equity and quality agendas but disagreed on implementation (Coombe, 2015).

### **Achievements of Education Policy Reform**

According to Coombe's findings (2015), the policy reform did not achieve its goals within the intended time-period. The study demonstrates that, while the educational sector agreed in principle with the need to achieve both equity and quality agendas, it was obviously divided on how to achieve these agendas concurrently. This remains the challenge for future policy-makers. Apparently, transforming Australia's higher education system policy weighs incompatible agendas of equity and quality. Moreover, the evaluation systems support extra unification of the higher education system in reference to the recommendation stated in Bradley Review of Higher Education. The Bradley Review represents an opportunity to set the Australian higher education system on a much better track, to the benefit of all Australians, particularly on two important issues:

- 1- Extending the expansion plan for the higher education and VET sectors;
- 2- Simplifying funding and regulatory models to both sectors: HE and VET.

### **Quality Policy Reform in 2013 (Teaching and Learning Standards)**

Australia introduced a new quality system after the Bradley's Reforms to higher education. TEQSA designed a package of regulations for higher education providers, including verifiable teaching and learning standards. The higher education leaders had serious concerns about defining those standards, especially the standards of teaching and learning. The sector leaders developed a range of projects to assure standards. In 2013, the Group of Eight (a term used to describe the self-organization of eight elite research-intensive institutions also known as the elite sandstones) established a quality verification system to conduct an external academic peer review

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process. Given the similar educational missions of the group, this system of benchmarking makes sense as a form of quality assurance. Potentially, the process improves the quality of education. This quality assurance system is more powerful than accreditation systems that focus on inputs rather than student learning outcomes (Probert, 2015).

### **Addressing the Main Problems**

Assessments about the quality of teaching and learning in higher education address a limited number of key concepts. Many of these concepts are extremely debatable. As a result, it was challenging to develop a framework for evaluation that is both widely accepted and feasible (Probert, 2015). During the last two decades, institutional reviews have focused on:

- Processes for evaluating progress,
- Ranking in bands and financial rewards for top performers by the Quality Assurance in Higher Education Committee;
- Monitoring and improving quality processes by the Australian Universities Quality Agency audits;
- Comparing performance that leads to national rankings and funding by the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund;
- Performing against standards to reward improvement by the First Compact Negotiation Process.
- Assessing the extent institution system meets the defined standards in teaching and learning by the TEQSA and the Standards; Academy Professional Accreditation.

### **Higher Education Reform Objectives**

Over the past two decades, universities have worked on a variety of measures to recognize good teaching and develop a new system to reward academic teachers and researchers. As Lee Dow and Braithwaite (2013) suggest, the institution should internally maintain quality assurances (Probert, 2015).

### **Aspects of Institutional quality assurance/self-regulation**

In Australia, higher education institutions have a long history of regulating and reviewing the quality of their programs through peer review process that plays multiple important roles (Probert, 2015). These roles include

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1. Quality assurance process conducted at discipline or program level based on international peer review.
2. Directly appoint and promote academic staff (through the selection and constitution of promotion committees).
3. Indirectly appoint and promote academic staff (through doctoral examination, national and international grants, or publication).

In addition to the peer review process, institutions also played a significant role in quality assurance (Probert, 2015): Professional courses are subject to external accreditation and periodic re-accreditation. Faculty and academic boards responsible for policies and quality assurance approve new programs. Universities mandate regular external reviews of their programs. Judgments are based on a shared scholarly culture of norms and practices.

### **Quality Reform Challenges**

The Teaching Criteria and Standards (AUTCS) assesses a set of expected outcomes under seven items of teaching criteria. This ranges from design and planning to the professionalism and personal efficacy of professors. Probert (2015) describes the AUTCS' detailed and complex framework in its generic form. The author mentions the need to interpret the framework in different disciplinary and institutional contexts. They focus specifically on how to be a good teacher rather than benchmarks of good teacher (Probert, 2015). Some of the additional challenges facing the AUTCS framework are:

1. Pressure and the need to prove quality of teaching internationally.
2. Ensuring the academic success of a much more varied cohort of students.
3. Higher education work force sees that bottom-up quality assurance displaced by top-down methods of measuring.
4. Little proof that international students are seeking details on teaching quality to determine their choice of institution.

To conclude, after the 2011 developments, interest grew for the adoption of Professional Standards Framework. Scholars consider the framework as a theoretically sound, practical tool for cooperative implementation of a functional and completely a quality-teaching framework, despite associated challenges (Probert, 2015).

### **Establish a System of Accreditation**

According to Lee Dow & Braithwaite, (2013), the newly launched policy assesses the quality of teaching in the classroom through education experts (Probert, 2015). Currently, most Australian universities require academics who teach complete an introductory course in teaching effectiveness, and many encourage the completion of higher qualifications as an indication of extensive interest in academic culture and an actual interest in improving personal teaching quality. In short, the Australian policy asserts that enrolment rates in higher education should continue to grow because system provides high-level faculty for persons that can and want to benefit from higher education.

### **Ranking and Rating**

The concept of increasing competition in higher education and, thus, enhancing institutional reputation, has gained more importance and become strongly related to research performance. These rankings heavily influence international students in their choice of institution. However, institutional rankings are challenges for assessing teaching and learning outcomes. Scholars have problematized the relationship between institutional rankings and the allocation of Australia's Learning and Teaching Fund (Probert, 2015). Despite these critiques, ranking and improving quality of teaching and learning contributed to increasing the enrolments of international students thirteen-fold during the period between 1998 and 2014 (Probert, 2015).

### **Awards for Teaching**

In Australia, academic professors perceive promotion as their highest reward. The major objectives of contemporary award encourage recognition of educators due to the fundamental importance of teaching and to raise the profile as well as acknowledge effective teaching. As a positive impact of awarding teachers, high performing educators receive the opportunity to develop the system of teaching and learning in their universities.

In conclusion, this section tackled the historical, culture, and socioeconomic contexts of Australia. In addition, describing the strength of higher education systems and the country's main reform achievements. Significantly, the Australian government considers international trends when developing national higher education

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policies. The strong economic situation created through national wealth encouraged the government to increase access to higher education and build a strong quality assurance system over the last few decades. These governmental efforts to improve the higher education sector as a whole have established a system with high levels of student satisfaction and graduate employment outcomes.

### **4.2 Canada: Historical and Socio-Economic Contexts and Higher Education**

#### **4.2.1 Overview of Canada**

Canada is located in the Northern area of North America, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean on the east, North Pacific Ocean on the west, the Arctic Ocean on the north, and the continental United States of America on the south. Canada is a constitutional royal system, with Queen Elizabeth II as the head of state. Starting from 1867, its government has been a federal system consisting of 10 provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador) and three territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut). Ottawa is Canada's capital city (World Atlas, 2017).

Canada is a culturally diverse society and with a bilingual language system. 19.6% of the population is foreign-born and 4.3% identify as indigenous (OECD, 2015). Canada is one of the largest countries in the globe in terms of surface area but has a relatively small population of around 30 million, primarily located in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The official languages are English (67% of the population) and French (13%, mostly in Quebec). Around 20% of the population speaks a native language that is neither English nor French (EP-Nuffic, 2011). Canada is a unique country that utilizes various higher education systems, and the meaning of the word "university" differs from one tertiary to another (Jean-Louis, 2015). Canadian higher education has also witnessed continual growth in sector performance (Xu, 2009). Canada is one of the world's seven major industrialized countries with developed technology and a reputable education system. Recently, the country improved its education system through an innovative design strategy, with a goal of having one of the best in the world. Its strong economy support and century of continued development have both facilitated Canada's gradual development of a higher education system with distinctive characteristics, numerous advantages, and valuable

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experiences (Xu, 2009). The international community considers Canada a leader in international education field (Kizilbash, 2013).

### **Multiculturalism in Canada**

The Canadian community is not monochromatic; the country contains a mixture of different cultures. Canada is a multicultural country and perceives that all people living in Canada have the right to express their identities, display pride in their roots and origins, and feel of belonging to Canadian society. The country encourages people's cultural independence and engagement within the Canadian society (Kizilbash, 2013).

### **Canadian Political System**

Canadian political system is parliamentary democracy, a federal system of parliamentary government with strong democratic traditions, and a constitutional monarchy. A multi-party system has evolved for legislative authority, and Canadians exhibit high confidence in their institutions. Canada is also a constitutional royal system where the Crowned Head serves as ruler of the state. This dual system emerged as the result of the United Kingdom's previous colonization of Canada (EP-Nuffic, 2011). Originally, the British Parliament established the Canadian's governmental structure through the British North America Act. Today the Constitution Act of 1867 directs the Canadian government structure. However, countries' leaders developed the federal system and division of powers after World War I, and the British government expressed its intent to grant full autonomy to these regions in the Balfour Declaration of 1926 (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

### **Canadian Economic Situation**

The 2017 economic outlook forecasts Canada's economic situation as stronger than the previous year. The latest forecasts expect the Canadian economy to increase GDP growth by 2%. The country had previously experienced slow growth over the last two years. For example, GDP expanded only 1.1% in 2015, followed by only 1.2% in 2016. This was the result of the falling prices of commodities and a resulting pullback in investment after a drastic decrease in the prices of crude oil. Fortunately, the business investments have subsequently begun to grow again (BDC, 2017).



#### **4.2.2 Canadian Education System**

The education system in Canada varies by level, content, and quality. The provinces and territories are individually responsible for primary, secondary, and higher education. Every province has a Ministry Department of Education responsible for educational policy, funding, and quality assurance. Since 1967, the separate education departments remained in regular contact through their participation in the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The most significant difference in education is between the two largest provinces, Ontario and Quebec. However, the education systems of the other provinces more closely reflects that of Ontario (EP-Nuffic, 2011). Canada has few private universities, although the number of private universities has increased gradually recently. Two of the main reason students aspire to study in Canada are the low tuition fees and the laxer immigration procedures. Institutions maximize on these higher demands to attract potential students, thus leading to increasing popularity (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

As previously discussed, Canada is a federation system made up of ten provinces and three territories with a central government, each with internal affairs. The provincial and territorial governments control higher education as stated in the Canadian Constitution of 1867. The federal government supports the higher education sector financially in each province through the university research funding (CICIC, 2010). Internationally, the Canadian education system is unique because of its efforts to balance respect for diversity of language and religious convictions with province educational goals. Independently, each Canadian province has its own system of higher education quality assurance, either governed by an institute representing universities, an agency, a government, or a group of actors. Every province applies different approaches and provides guidelines to audit given programs. Usually, the provincial quality assurance systems review the offered programs in order to guarantee the quality of the academic degree and observe the system's effectiveness.

In brief, there two primary factors explain the Canadian education system's strength: respect for diversity and the welfare state. There three additional policy factors that are also central to understanding the Canadian education system: the impact of education at the provincial level, teacher selection and balanced funding, and curriculum development.

### **Primary and Secondary Education**

In Canada, general education consists of 6 years of primary education, followed by 6 years of secondary education. There are 3 different models for how to divide the 12 educational years, and provinces differ in their approach. The first model is (6 + 3 + 3) years that includes primary, junior high, and senior high school. The second model ( 8 + 4) years that include primary and secondary education. The final model is (6 + 6) years that includes primary and secondary education but allocates the division differently. In general, secondary education is the predominant system starting in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. The graduates of grade 12 are awarded a certificate of the high school diploma regardless of which model their province uses (EP-Nuffic, 2011). Canada receives high numbers of immigrants, accordingly, there are about 40,000 immigrant students joining the Canadian public system annually. Ontario is the largest province, where 40% of Canada's population resides, and it has 2 million students enrolled in approximately 5,000 schools. It is also home to the majority of immigrant students. Ontario's high school graduation rate increased from 68% to 79% between 2003 and 2010, and the government's current target is to reach 85% (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

### **4.2.3 Canadian Higher Education System**

The Canadian higher education system is highly decentralized. The Canadian constitution delegates responsibility for higher education to the provinces. The Canadian higher education system is a collection of provincial and territorial higher education systems, which sustain relationships under the umbrella of the federal government. The federal government's role is limited, and it rarely intervenes in educational affairs. The decentralized system has worked very well for Canada (Kizilbash, 2013). According to the higher educational level among OECD countries, Canada ranks highest with 55% of the global number of educated persons.

### **Historical Background of Canadian Higher Education**

#### **French Regime**

In 1608, Champlain established the first permanent European colonial settlement in modern day Quebec. By 1628, the colony expanded to 65 residents in the settlement. Part of the colonial project included civilizing the indigenous peoples through education and religious conversion. Under the French colonial rule, the

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Roman Catholic Church was responsible for all levels of education. Civil authority supported the educational work of the church and sought royal support for schools (Jones, 2014). In 1635, the first secondary school was established in Quebec. Until 1760, the Quebec College was the only secondary school in New France. The college created a program of traditionally European studies for secondary students. Then, the school gradually introduced more academically advanced coursework, becoming the first higher education programs in Canada. The French rule ended with the British capture of Quebec in 1760, after the unsuccessful expansion of French colonies in North America. The British and French formalized the Treaty of Paris in 1763, awarding the British control of Nova Scotia and Acadia (Jones, 2014).

### **British Colonies**

While the British destroyed many of the remaining French institutions, they tolerated the Catholic Church and its dominant role in providing education in the French language. Later on, a dual educational system emerged in Quebec, with separate Catholic Francophone and Protestant Anglophone educational structures. In terms of Canadian higher education, the history dates back to the advanced courses offered by a Jesuit college in 1663 (Harris, 1976). It was the first academic degree granting college. Subsequently, the American Revolution influenced the development of higher education in Canada during the British colonial rule, as those loyal to the British Empire moved north to live under the protection of the British crown. The migration of those loyalists had a great impact on the social, economic, and political dimensions of the northern colonies (Jones, 2014). According to Mui (1994), the colonial legislatures established the first non-Catholic colleges for British loyalists. In 1789, they created first King's College in Windsor (Nova Scotia), and then in 1800, they established College of New Brunswick in Fredericton (Jones, 2014).

In 1821, the estate of James McGill funded the establishment of McGill College in Montreal. In 1827, the British Crown awarded a charter to King's College at York; an institution that was later renamed Toronto. In the 1840s, a number of religiously affiliated universities began, including Presbyterian Queen's College, the Baptist's Acadia College, and the Methodist's Victoria College. The establishment of private denominational colleges by specific church organizations became the dominant institutional model for higher education across 19<sup>th</sup> century (Jones, 2014). The political disputes between religious groups and within colonial legislatures led to

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the reestablishment of King's College at York as the secular, provincial University of Toronto in 1849, and the University of New Brunswick played the same role in that colony in 1858 (Jones, 1996). This move reflected the British government's attempt to offer higher education not linked to a particular religious' affiliation.

### **From Confederation System to WWII**

Canada emerged from the British North America Act of 1867 as a federation of the three colonies (the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia). The British Government approved the BNA Act that was subsequently replaced by the Constitution Act 1982, which served as Canada's constitution until the Canadian government approved a new one (Jones, 2014). The constitution established a strong federal system through assigning responsibility for important issues, such as trade and defense, to the national government and assigning the local issues, such as education and healthcare, to the provinces. The federal government tried to manage between the need for national governance and the provinces' right to pursue agendas related to the needs of their distinct populations. At the time, the government did not focus on higher education because only a minor portion of the population required it. The provinces at that time pursued different approaches. In particular, the Roman Catholic Church played a major role in determining the trajectory of the Quebec Francophone education. Meanwhile, after the confederation Ontario province, this region adopted a secular approach to higher education (Jones, 2014).

In eastern Canadian provinces, higher education consists of a mixture of institutional types, including public, private, secular, and denominational. These areas traditionally suffered from limited relationships between higher education institutions and local government. Those limitations needed revisions, especially when the public accused political leaders of interference at Toronto University. The government established the Royal Commission to review the relationship between the government and the university, including the internal governance system. Consequently, the commission delegated the government's role in monitoring the university to a board consisting of citizens selected by the government and responsible for the overall administration. In addition, they endowed the academic senate with responsible for the academic policy, effectively dividing the responsibility between the two bodies' roles (Jones, 1996; 2002).

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Manitoba became a province 1870, and after seven years, Manitoba University was established. In 1917, the legislation officially approved the university (Harris, 1976; Morton, 1979). The number of universities continued to grow rapidly at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the University of Alberta (1906), the University of Saskatchewan (1907), and the University of British Columbia (1908) were all established at this time. Before the World War II, a collection of small public, private, secular, and religious universities characterized the Canadian higher education system (Jones, 2014).

### **Post WWII and till Current Higher Education System**

After the World War II, awareness of the role of higher education in Canadian society and culture significantly changed. In the post-war period, the federal government provided funded programs for returning soldiers to receive a free university education and basic living costs. The programs successfully encouraged the education of returning soldiers and integrated them in different sectors of the changing labor market. From 1945 to 1946, there was a dramatic 46% increase in the enrolment at Canadian universities. The numbers grew from 15,000 to 35,000 due to the enrolment of 20,000 soldiers (Cameron, 1991). The enrolments continued to increase into the 1950s (Cameron, 1991). As a result, universities requested financial support from the federal and provincial government to pursue expansion according to the increased demand for higher education.

Most universities reformed their governance structures by the early 1970s. University senate and board meetings became more open and transparent. Provincial education governance individually developed a different higher education system that alternatively involved an expanded university sector and a non-university sector. The government's role in supporting university research expanded. When the federal government initiated modern methods for addressing the budget deficit, fiscal transfers became a crucial mechanism for savings in the 1990s; and by the turn of the century the federal government had reduced the budget shortages. The role of the federal government continued to grow at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 1998, the government created the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, a separate non-profit agency that provided \$2.5 billion in education funding. Its main mission was to provide student financial assistance for ten years, starting in 2000 (Fisher, et al, 2006). To boost research, the government originated the Canada Excellence Research

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Chairs (CRC) program to receive and review researchers' institutional proposals and fund successful proposals up to \$10 million annually over a period of seven years. In addition, the creation of the CRC program established 2000 research chairs at universities. The program allocated the chairs to institutions after their succeeded in the CRC's competition for grants (Jones, 2014).

### **Languages Used in Education**

Canada is a bilingual country and the language of education is either English or French. Canada supports English and French minority populations (in provinces where the primry language is the other) by providing minority-language education (OECD, 2015).Some higher education institutions are bilingual, such as the University of Ottawa and Laurentian University. Despite the British and French influence over Canada during the colonial period, the USA has exerted considerable influence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is for this reason that many elements of the Canadian education system resemble the American system. In territories such as Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and North-West, education is primarily offered in English, but with limited educational offerings in French. However, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and Yukon offer education only in English (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

### **Governance Approach**

Canada is a multicultural country, and each territory has a direct responsibility for higher education: The national (federal) government provides support for Indigenous Canadians' education, research and innovation, and scholarships and fellowships. Direct support for higher education institutions is under provincial responsibilities (Jean-Louis, 2015). There is no Ministry of Education at the central level; education policy is set mainly by the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) to coordinate the provincial education policy (Xu, 2009). The Canadian national governmental structure has three levels, each its own responsibilities. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Federal Canadian government is responsible for citizenship, immigration, national defense, and trades.
- Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for education, health care, and public roads and highways.

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- Municipal or local governments (cities, towns, and villages in Ontario) are responsible for firefighting, city streets, and other local matters. If there is no local government, the province provides these services.

As previously discussed, the Canadian higher education policy is highly decentralized, as the provinces and territories govern the educational systems within their authorities. Under the Canadian constitutional arrangement, the ten provinces and three territories have legislative authority for all public policy relating to the organization and delivery of formal higher educational services internally. The government created universities as autonomous non-profit organization that receive public support through provincial operating grants and under provincial legislation (Xu, 2009). Recently, the government exerted efforts to reform previous governance policies. The government adopted policy tools (albeit assembled in different policy mixes) and designed a strategic plan to overcome gaps in previous governance and the inherited uneven distribution of stakes (Capano, 2014).

### **Universities and Institutions**

In Canada, around 230 publicly and privately authorized institutions have the provincial and territorial right to grant degrees. The higher education system includes 130 public universities and colleges and 82 non-profit private institutions, in addition to 19 for-profit institutions (CICIC, 2010). Canada is one of the most well educated countries in the world, and their higher education participation rates are the highest in the world. Approximately, 60% between 20 and 24 years of age either have achieved a higher education degree or are currently attending an institute of higher learning. Canada placed third among the 24 OCED countries and well above the average of 40% for higher education obtainment. The 2005 Youth in Transition survey specified that about 79% of survey participants had enrolled in a higher education program (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). A collection of legislative and administrative mechanisms became tools for guaranteeing quality of higher education programs. Professional societies have accredited schools across the country. At an institutional level, the Association of Universities and Colleges has a procedure for checking quality at institutions that wish to become members (CICIC, 2010).

### Demographic Challenges

There are demographics challenges impacting Canadian higher education institutions, particularly as some jurisdictions' populations are growing quickly because of immigration. This could result in a decline in the number of individuals seeking higher education that come from Canadian schools and an increase in the number of immigrant students. To address this, higher education institutions are in the process of developing greater flexibility in the way they design and deploy programs. For example, new initiatives have embraced online learning, recognition of prior learning experiences, and collaborative programs with employers in order to meet this growing demand. However, these initiatives are not systematically pursuing learning accreditation for work-equivalency programs (Jean-Louis, 2015). The remarkable achievements in research and institution programs are presented in table (4.3) as follows:

Table (4.3): Achievements in Research and Institution Programs

Achievement	Examples
Growing the investment in research and development	Universities invest about (\$11.9) billion per year in research to become successful in the development of new knowledge.
Collaborative Programs	Collaborative programs between institutions in different provinces or in different parts of the world. For Example: Kellogg-Schulich MBA at York University. Nurse Practitioner program between the Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the University of Regina Joint PhD at 3 Ontario universities Joint MA programs in history between the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. Similar arrangements are made with many other accredited institutions worldwide.

Source: Jean-Louis, 2015, p.13

### Academic Programs

Community colleges provide two-year programs (MBO or HBO). Colleges and universities provide undergraduate and graduate program up to the doctoral degree level. The same institution can provide both higher professional education and academic education, and the terms 'college' and 'university' are used interchangeably. The quality of education offered by both types of institutions can vary. Universities provide both graduate and undergraduate programs and usually contain multiple professional schools; however, colleges tend to focus on undergraduate programs. Canadian higher education institutions can have various legal statuses as described in table (4.4) as follows:



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Table (4.4): Canadian Higher Education Institutions and Legal Statuses

Legal Status	Legal Status Description
Recognized	HE institutions are authorized to issue their own diplomas, and the quality of their programs is assured.
Authorized	HE institutions have limited authority to issue degrees or diplomas.
Registered or licensed	Institutions and their programs are monitored by the government in terms of quality of education.
Non-registered	Private institutions whose programs are not monitored.

Source: EP-Nuffic, 2011, p.6

### Funding of Higher Education

The funding arrangements and governance policies for higher education differ in each province and territory (Shanahan & Jones, 2007). However, the Canadian universities boast a successful higher education sector with a global reputation for high quality and internationally leading rankings (OECD, 2012). Canadian universities and colleges depend on two income sources, governmental grants and tuition. However, each province has its own balance between these two revenue sources controlled and allocated by their own government (John, 2014). In 2010, about 42.6% of expenditure for higher education came from private sources, including 20% from household tuition expenditure. The provinces and territories, in cooperation with the federal government, also provide financial funding for higher education. The federal government supplies indirect financial support through transfer payments to the provinces and territories, which the latter then expends on education programs (OECD, 2015). In addition, provincial and territorial governments and the federal government provide a combination of loans, bursaries, scholarships, grants, and debt relief to support access and affordability. This helps reduce the overall private contribution to higher education (OECD, 2015). Among the most notable features of Canadian higher education system are the uniqueness of its administration and policy, the distinct features of university management model, dynamic international programs, and the flexibility and diversity in both school and financing systems (Xu, 2009). Most higher education institutions depend on their own resources to establish credibility and market educational resources (Desai-Trilokekar & Jones, 2007). To conclude, government funding for universities and colleges has dropped between 1970 and 2012, requiring a higher share of tuition contributions. Funding resources have been an issue of concern for government, as the only two resources are governmental grants and tuition.

### **Privatization**

The public sector is the primary provider of higher education, and most Canadian students apply for public colleges and universities. In spite of this, there are notable private universities, such as Quest and University Canada West in British Columbia. There are also some private colleges in Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The majority of private education focuses on college programs. Foreign education is a newly emerging trend in Canada, and includes the American Farleigh Dickinson University in British Columbia and the Australian Charles Stuart University in Ontario (Jean-Louis, 2015). The Canadian private institutions are not registered countrywide but, rather, recognized inside the province (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

### **Qualifications Degrees**

Canadian universities offer degrees in three consecutive academic stages: bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree. In addition, colleges known as community college, institutes of technology, or university colleges offer diplomas and certificates. This number is supplemented by close to 150 licensed, non-degree-granting higher education institutions that offer diplomas or certificates. Of the non-degree granting institutions, more than 100 are public, 20 are non-profit, and 27 are for-profit institutions. Additionally, there are additional thousands of unlicensed higher education institutions (CICIC, 2010).

### **Admissions Qualifications**

A person who wishes to apply to a higher education program in any specialization is able to do so provided they have completed a high school diploma. Programs require this for categorization as a higher education program. Bachelor's program learners have vast flexibility to choose electives, supplementing a professional major with subjects of a more academic nature and vice versa (CICIC, 2010). Significantly, educational status and prestige does not come so much from the fact that one has simply completed higher education, rather it comes from the level of degree obtained.

### **Access and Equity**

In Canada, access to higher education is broadly discussed and there are various factors affect this issue. Those factors include the socio-economics, familial

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education, culture, and geographical situation. Canadian universities require tuition fees, so the financial issue is the most significant factor influencing access and student enrollment. Recently, the government enacted various options to assist students financially, as Canada moves towards educational access for all. There are examples of remarkable achievements in access to higher education (Jean-Louis, 2015). In terms of expanded access to higher education, enrolment increased in Ontario increased from 10,000 students in 1960 to 400,000 students in 2007. This statistic is consistent with other regions of Canada. Moreover, Canada has made remarkable achievements regarding gender equity in higher education and contributed to improve Canada's overall gender equity. In 1966, there were 75,000 women in higher education, as compared to 465,000 women in 2006 (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### **Quality in Higher Education**

Reports describe Canadian higher education as a strong, innovative and successful system that includes globally reputable institutions in the fields of teaching, research and social services (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### **Accreditation**

In the Canadian context, accreditation means that the evaluation of education programs by professional organizations. Provinces are responsible for the quality and accreditation of their own universities and institutions. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) provides the required guidance for accreditation and quality assurance; however, it is not responsible for giving accreditation. In fact, not all Canadian universities and colleges are subject to systematic program and institutional review due to the various state and territorial practices that resulting lack of consistency. There are no national accreditation mechanisms except for professional programs authorized by professional accrediting bodies (Jongbloed, 2008). Regarding the university ranking, the MacLean's Guide to Canadian Universities provides detailed information about the positive and negative features of each institution, including rankings of the registered universities in Canada. This annual publication has been published since 1992 (EP-Nuffic, 2011). The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials posts all institutional accreditation on its website (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### **Quality Assurance**

Regarding the quality assurance system, provinces develop their own policies and strategies for controlling the quality assurance process in terms of administration and planning (Jean-Louis, 2015). In the Canadian context, Quality Assurance (QA) means the education standards recommended by institutions, professional organizations, and government authorities (EP-Nuffic, 2011). In 2007, the CMEC enacted the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework to set uniform standards and learning outcomes for programs such as bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degrees (EP-Nuffic, 2011). There is a separate governance regime for international students. By 1986, most provinces charged differential fees for international students. At that time, the CMEC recommended the government establish a Council on Foreign Student Policy and Programs, resulting in the creation of a national policy on foreign students (Kizilbash, 2013). Canadian Quality assurance organizations are as follows:

- Degree Quality Assurance Board (British Columbia)
- Campus Alberta Quality Council
- Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board
- HED Education Quality Assessment Board (Ontario)
- Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island)

This list underscores the lack of a national oversight body supervising the quality assurance process, as each province has its own processes. While there is no national oversight, some professional accreditation associations authorize the associated professional program. Canadian universities and colleges are practicing various systematic program and intuitional review (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### **International Education and Training**

Hosting international students is an important indicator of internationalization efforts. The value of international students revolves around the benefits of broader national and international goals (Cudmore, 2005). In 1980, international students came to Canada from approximately 175 countries, with the majority (52 %) of students coming from Hong Kong, USA, Malaysia, the UK and Iran, respectively. In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the representation of Asian countries increased. Starting in 2001, China became the top source of international students, with 16,000

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enrolled in Canadian universities. By 2008, the number of countries sending students grew. Today, half of all international students in Canada come from one of five countries: China, USA, India, France and South Korea (AUCC, 2011).

The French-Canadian exchange program deserves special attention. In the early 2000s, recruitment activities in France led to a steady increase in students, generating more than 7,100 students in 2008 and overtaking the USA as the second leading sending country. In comparison, more than 6,600 students came from the USA, and fourth place India sent almost 2,900 students. Approximately 2,780 students came to Canada from South Korea (AUCC, 2011). The substantially larger number of French students in Canada partially reflects the historical links between the countries. International students indicated that higher income and employment rates drive demand for university education across Canada. The remarkable growth rate for international students in Canada's universities is not unique. These increases are similar to enrolment growth in nations such as Japan, Sweden, Norway, and Finland. As new competitors, such as New Zealand, Korea, and the Czech Republic, emerge into the international student recruitment market, it is expected Canada will face competition. Another factor, which will increase demand on universities, is the needs of the indigenous Canadian population. As with all Canadians, indigenous Canadians with university degrees earn higher wages and have higher employment rates. Employment rates increase significantly with higher levels of education. Accordingly, the growing demand for university education has reinforced the value of a university degree to the individual graduate and their society (AUCC, 2011). In short, the increased educational attainment will open higher education to traditionally marginalized indigenous Canadian communities. Improving quality of university education through offering more interactive and engaging learning experiences is consistent with improved academic performance, knowledge gaining and skills development. Significantly, many immigrant groups and migrant students come to Canada for its reputable education system.

### **Distance Learning and Online Education**

Canada is a world leader on online and distance education. As early as 1970, Athabasca University established a distance education institution for online courses and operating across Canada. Athabasca launched the first online MBA and the first Distance Education Master's program in 1974 (Jean-Louis, 2015). Canada offers

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distance-learning opportunities to those in remote areas, and credit transfer between distance programs is very common and easier than between in-person programs. One program example is ‘articulated’ programs, in which institutions cooperate and agree upon which institution will provide certain aspects a distance program and issue the diploma. Information on these programs is available in transfer guides. Most universities and colleges across Canada offer blended programs. In Western Canada, universities focus on the use of open education resources to increase access. Laval and TÉLUQ Universities offer more blended learning courses in French than any other institution globally (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### **Job Market and Skills of Graduates**

The 1990s were a period of exceptional growth for the Canadian economy. Intensive economic changes took place that affected the occupational fields and education levels. According to this, the university graduates filled about 1.9 million jobs in 1990 compared to the 4.4 million they filled in 2010(AUCC, 2011). The report of Canadian economic force reveals that professional jobs require higher levels of education. In fields such as teaching, social, business, finance, art, medication, engineering, sciences, and law, university graduates comprise 60% to 80% of the positions. The field of management is the fastest-growing occupations in Canada, and it primarily employees’ university graduates. Frequent changes in the global knowledge economy are the reason behind the expansion of higher education systems globally, due to the worldwide competition for well-educated and widely skilled applicants. The demand for higher education will continue to demand higher education in line with market (AUCC, 2011). There are emerging provincial and federal initiatives, such as the Canada Job Grant, that provide a wide range of incentives and support for employers. The local governments that provide such incentives and support should assess how well those incentives actually generate new training, contribute to skills development, and shift resources from poor performing to strong-performing programs.

To conclude, Canada’s strong economy and a century of continued development led to the development of a higher education system with its own characteristics and advantages. The country is one of the world’s seven major industrialized countries and is equipped with developed technology and education (Xu, 2009).

#### **4.2.4 Higher Education Reform in Canada**

Canadian government policy focuses on increasing access to post-secondary education (PSE). Providing higher education improves country's prosperity and increases access to equalized economic opportunities (Drewes, 2010).

##### **Initiatives of Canadian Higher Education Reform**

The Canadian private sector moved slightly towards providing vocational-style programs that do not grant advanced degrees and online programs. However, there is also a gradual increase in the number of private universities granting academic degrees. Significantly, this has translated into a vast increase in the students enrolled in private institutions in Canada (Schuetze & Mendiola, 2012). Canada designed effective programs to facilitate funding student education to provide equal opportunity (Schuetze & Mendiola, 2012). The Canadian government recognizes the need to protect and preserve the academic integrity and governance autonomy of the individual institutions and programs. Moreover, it understands the responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance as belonging to the institutions' management.

##### **Challenges and Issues Facing Canadian Higher Education**

Canadian higher education encounters several well-documented challenges concerning accessibility, unstable institutional boundaries and categories, quality, and funding known to all higher education leaders and policy makers (Jean-Louis, 2015).

**Accessibility:** The population rate of indigenous Canadians grew more rapidly (45% increase) than that of the non-indigenous (8%), particularly during the period between 1996 and 2006. This is one reason for indigenous' lower rates of access to higher education in comparison to non-indigenous Canadians (Jean-Louis, 2015). Canada ranks tenth in terms of the ratio of graduates who have accomplished their university degrees (OECD, 2012). That caused the high levels of higher education attainment.

**Unstable Institutional Boundaries and Categories:** There are numerous differences between universities and colleges but the two forms of institution overlap. First, in some provinces, colleges have a direct relationship with the university sector through the provision of pre-university or university-transfer programs. In other provinces, such as Ontario and Manitoba, the college sector and the university sector

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both operate concurrently without formal transfer function in other provinces. Previously, the divide was sharp; universities granted academic degrees and colleges did not (OECD, 2012). However, in the 1990s, several provinces expanded access to university level degrees by permitting non-university institutions to grant academic degrees if they maintained the quality standards and increase access for population. This opened the door to transform a number of community colleges into university colleges, and later on, to shift these colleges to teaching-intensive universities. In response to demographic shifts in Canada, the government responded to student expectations and offered them access to quality online education with flexibility and diverse learning pathways (Jean-Louis, 2015).

**Quality:** The shortage of institutional funding for research leads to reduction in the capacity of institutions, and a negative impact on the innovation agenda (Jean-Louis, 2015). The emphasis community colleges place on employability and job market preparation decreases the concentration on liberal art skills, competencies, and relevant programs. The expansion of degree-granting community colleges and the emergence of hybrid institutions raised new questions about of the features of the institutions that offer university degrees and degree quality (Marshall, 2008). In brief, the education system in Canada is different, containing differences in level, content and quality. Canada has few private universities, although recently there is an increase in the number of private universities. In the Canadian context, quality assurance means that the education standards (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

**Funding:** Some of higher education institutions face financial difficulty that might require government intervention, due to a problem in revenue and cost management (Jean-Louis, 2015). In most provinces, the local government controls revenue sources and determines the amount allocated to higher education. Consequently, the provincial and territorial governments directly or indirectly control internal university decisions regarding tuition fees (Johns, 2014). As a result, the tuition fees in most provinces have differentiated levels between sectors.

### **Policies and Practice Reforms in Canada- Graduate Skills**

According to a 2012 report, Canadian unemployment rates have decreased since 2008. Similarly, the unemployment rates are higher for youth (defined as 25-34 year-olds) in comparison to unemployment for the Canadian adult population as a whole (defined as 25-64 year-olds) as a whole has also decreased. The Survey of



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Adult Skills found that country has the lowest proportion of work force who encountered the problem of gap between their abilities and the tasks they perform at work among countries participating. Country agents conducted the survey with the intention of improving graduate skills and job market viewpoints effectively (Johns, 2014).

According to the Industrial Research and Development Internship program (2007), talented graduates matched with businesses in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in order to support transitions into the job market. Based on the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) of 2003, the Canadian Government invested YES resources to help youth between the ages of 15 and 30 transition into the job market by equipping them with the required skills. From 2010 to 2015, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) funded CAD \$210 Million to increase marketability. ASETS is a governmental broad-based labor market program to support Aboriginal people across Canada and administers the Skills and Partnership Fund, as well as training-to-employment programs for specific job opportunities (OECD, 2015). In 2012, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) launched a search tool to help Aboriginal students find scholarships offered by governmental institutions, private and public companies, and individual Canadian donors. For example, apprentices in Red Seal trades applied for grants such as Apprenticeship Incentive Grants in 2007 and Apprenticeship Completion Grants in 2009. In 2006, there additional financial supports included the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit for employers (OECD, 2015).

### **Policies and Practice Reforms in Canada - Access and Funding**

As mentioned throughout this study, higher education funding is the responsibility of provinces and territories with some assistance from the federal government. Provinces and territories combine the federal funding with their own sources of education funding and provide a mixture of loans, bursaries, scholarships, and grants to fund affordable student access. However, funding for VET is more precarious and dependent on the provinces and territories policies (OECD, 2015). Canada Student Grants and Canada Student Loans provide a program of student financial assistance to help students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, those students are eligible for federal government loans. The repayment assistance plan of 2008 helps students with disabilities. Moreover, the Canadian

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government provides a Registered Education Saving Plan (RESP) to help parents save for their children's education. The country provides funding for innovation and research through scholarships and fellowships for undergraduate and postgraduate students (OECD, 2015).

### **Achievements of Canadian Higher Education Reform**

Canada has four universities on the top 100 list of the "Times Higher Education" world ranking: University of Toronto (20<sup>th</sup>), University of British Columbia (32<sup>nd</sup>), McGill University (39<sup>th</sup>), and McMaster University (94<sup>th</sup>). There are additional four on the top 200 list of the rankings: University of Montréal (113<sup>th</sup>), University of Alberta (124<sup>th</sup>), University of Victoria (173<sup>rd</sup>), and University of Ottawa (188<sup>th</sup>) (Jean-Louis, 2015). This success is a result of the growing national investment in research and development. Currently, universities invest about \$11.9 billion annually in research, and as a result, Canada is very successful in the development of new knowledge and patents. A significant increase in access expansion of higher education combined with growing satisfaction is also an indicator of educational policies' success. This occurred after an expansion of existing institutions and the development of new institutions (Jean-Louis, 2015).

One development policy used by the government is the creation of Centers of Excellence across Canadian universities. The government invests in a network of Centers of Excellence, including the Canadian Water Network, Stem Cell Network, BioFuel Network, which enables researchers from all over Canada to cooperate on large-scale challenges affecting the country's social and economic. Rather than fostering completion, these policies enhance collaboration between universities and research centers for greater social impact (Johns, 2014). One of the achievements of this collaboration is its expansive nature. The government has successfully encouraged cooperation across institutions, often among those institutions in different provinces or in different countries across the world. This ranges from the Kellogg-Schulich MBA at York University, to the collaborative Nurse Practitioner program between the Saskatchewan Polytechnic and the University of Regina. Another example is the joint Ph.D. at provided by three Ontario universities and the cooperative MA programs in history between the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. Internationally, students at the Canadian University of Dubai can complete their first two years of study in Dubai and then finish their degree

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at one of several Canadian universities. There are similar arrangements with many other accredited institutions around the world, such as the British Columbia's series of cooperative programs between its higher education institutions and partner institutions in China (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### **Evaluation of Canadian Higher Education Reform**

Despite Canada's successes, a number of challenges remain unaddressed. First, the three Canadian territories face enormous challenges in serving the higher education needs of their jurisdiction given their size and sparse populations, which is different from the provincial governments. The physical size of these three northern territories is large, but has a total population of less than 120,000 (Johns, 2014). Another problem is the need to expand graduate education for well-equipped technical graduates and to strengthen the research and development structure (Jones & Weinrib, 2011). Canada adopted the most decentralized approach to higher education internationally, which led to a complex arrangement of different provincial and territorial higher education systems. This complexity caused a range of challenges for Canadian higher education related to the absence of quality assessment mechanisms, integrated national data systems, policies, and standards. Nevertheless, there are remarkable indications that the Canadian governance approach led to high participation rates, as well as high levels of higher education attainment (Johns, 2014). In 2015, in response to increasing number of teachers, the Ontario government announced a modernization of teacher education. This process will lengthen the training process by two years to increase teacher qualifications and proficiency in teaching methods. This section's exploration of the Canadian context reveals that learning is the key to Canadian future prosperity; however, there are many opportunities for improvement despite the achievements of universities and colleges. Canada is one of the countries with the most developed technology and reputable education. With its strong economy, the government supports Canada's gradual higher education development along with its unique characteristics, advantages, and valuable experiences (Xu, 2009).

### **4.3 Egypt: Historical and Socio-Economic Contexts and Higher Education**

#### **4.3.1 Overview of Egypt**

The country is located in a strategic position connecting Africa with Asia and the major southern eastern gate between the African continent and Europe. Its location in Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Libya to the east, the Gaza Strip to the west and Sudan to the south (World Atlas, 2017). Due to the country's central location, diverse empires have invaded and occupied Egypt. As a result, it was exposed to numerous conquering civilizations, including the Ottomans, Romans, Greeks, Pharaohs, Arabs, Fatimids, Mamelukes, Ptolemais, and French under Napoleon Bonaparte. Each of these empires had a unique impact on contemporary Egypt's culture and socio-economic contexts (Abdel Hamid, 2010). Furthermore, the country began building the Suez Canal in 1869 to connect the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Gulf of Suez. The canal is one of the world's most vital shipping paths between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East (World Atlas, 2017). It attracts international business from a variety of cultures. Cairo is Egypt's capital and largest city and is the greatest modern cultural capital in the Arab world. The Arabic language is Egypt's official language, but the country also uses English and French, particularly in the economic spheres (Amin, 2010).

Egypt's demographics present a challenge for development because of the high birth rate. In September 2017, the website of Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) announced the latest Egyptian population as 95,801,987 (CAPMAS, 2017). However, the country leaders tackled the issue positively and now consider the population as a powerful human resource that the country has to utilize effectively and efficiently (OECD, 2010). That is why the country prioritizes developing human power beginning with the education system to boost the long-term development process. The country leaders target human resources development through higher education and advanced technical training.

#### **Multiculturalism in Egypt**

Egypt is a highly populated country in a central point between three continents . This has encouraged peoples from different backgrounds to establish themselves successfully in Egypt. The country has accumulated a great culture over thousands of years, during which each of the successive Egyptian civilizations contributed to a

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coherent entity of thinking, literature and arts, influenced by the Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, and Islamic civilizations. Moreover, Cairo has always been the most active cultural capital in the Middle East, where the Egyptian culture, literary and artistic life emerged and still flourish (Amin, 2010). Due to its history, human capabilities, and relationships with Europe, Egypt has become a cultural pioneer in the modern Arab world; Egyptian writers, thinkers, authors, artists, and musicians excel in the Arab cultural production fields. In brief, the country welcomes multiculturalism and facilitates residency, so individuals including African immigrants and refugees can engage in the community with an open minded and openhearted (MOC, 2005).

### **Egyptian Political System**

The Egyptian political system relies on a form of republicanism defined as semi-presidential that includes a president alongside with a prime minister and a cabinet. Both of the prime minister and the cabinet are responsible for the legislature of the country. Additionally, the Egyptian Parliament has the most ancient legislative authority in Africa and the Middle East (Amin, 2010).

### **Egyptian Economic Situation**

After the Revolution of 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, the economic situation dramatically dropped due to the country's unrest, political instability, and upheaval during the transitional period. After the Revolution of 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2013, the country settled on roadmap to start a new era and regain control and power in the region (World Bank, 2017).

According to annual rates of GDP presented on the Global Economic Prospects website, the average of annual rates of GDP growth during the period of 2011-2014 was only 2%, which indicates the dire economic situation during Egypt's unstable period. Later on, in 2015, the economic growth gradually improved and the annual rate of GDP was around 4.4%. In 2016, the growth rate continued to increase to around 4.3%. Recently, in 2017, the overall budget deficit dropped to 5.4% of GDP, despite the fact that the deficit was 6.4% the year prior (World Bank, 2017). The economic situation is predicted to continue growing in 2018, due to the latest economic reforms that occurred in November 2016. The liberalization of the exchange rate occurred because of a lack of the foreign currency required an

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improvement in Egypt's external accounts. To conclude, Egypt's economy is growing slightly as investments and exports contribute positively (World Bank, 2017). Figure (4.1) presents the changes in the average of the annual rates of GDP growth in 2013, 2015, and 2017 with an indication of movement in a positive direction.



Figure (4.1): The Economic Growth Rate in 2013, 2015, and 2017.  
(Source: Global Economic Prospects)

According to the Egyptian Strategic Plan 2014-2030, the country aims to achieve growth and flourishing in the Egyptian socio-economic sector through sustainable development, justice, stable growth, and guarantee of convenient life to all people (MOHE, 2014).

### 4.3.2 Egyptian Education System

Egypt has encountered numerous governance changes over the last decade, which affect the educational system. Article 19 of the 2014 Constitution, Egypt's most recent constitution, states that education is a right owed to all citizens and is obligatory starting from basic education until the end of the pre-university stage. Additionally, Egypt institutions provide free education in different stages. According

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to the Egyptian constitution, the percentage of government spending on education is about 4% of the Gross National Product (GNP), which it should increase in order to meet international standards.

Egypt has prioritized its national education system in its national agenda. In light of the country's Education Strategic Plan 2014-2030, entitled "Together We Can," Egypt emphasized education as an essential right for all citizens. To achieve this goal, it called for cooperation across all societal institutions under a decentralized system to improve educational quality and sustainable development. The educational policy aims at achieving accessibility with equal opportunities, quality of education, and productivity of institutional systems (MOHE, 2014). The Egyptian education system is categorized into two sectors: the pre-university education system and the post-secondary education system or the higher education system. The pre-university educational system consists of two stages: basic and secondary education. Public and private schools and institutions offer basic education. The post-secondary education system is the higher education provided by universities or higher institutes (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

### **The public and private higher education institutions**

In reference to the OECD (2010), in Egypt, the Prime Minister has the lead in policy making, analyzing policies, and planning in cooperation with the Information and Decision Support Centre for the Prime Minister and Cabinet of Ministers. Moreover, the following higher education units report to the Prime Minister in contribution to Ministry's decisions:

- The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)
- The Supreme Council for Science and Technology
- The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAAE)
- The Education Development Fund
- The Supreme Council for Human Resources (SCHR)

The function of MOHE depends on different Ministries that have a permanent role in Higher education reforms as described below in table (4.5):

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Table (4.5): The Roles of Governmental Ministries

Ministry	Responsibility
Ministry of Finance	Finance policy and Budget allocations Restricts institutions to reallocate funds
Ministry of Planning	National “investment” budget
Ministry of Administrative Development	Public employment in Egypt Regulation of public/civil service employment Approval on the number of staff positions
Ministry of Education	Pre-university education system
Ministry of Manpower and Employment	Operation of research centers or training programs
Ministry of Trade and Industry	
Ministry of Health	
Ministry of International Co-operation	Manage the co-operative agreements with other countries

Source: OECD, 2010, p.81

### Pre-University Education System

The education system has two types of education systems: the secular system and the religious system termed the “Al-Azhar education system.” The pre-university education system is only in the secular private and public schooling system (Emira, 2014). Table (4.6) defines the Egyptian education system and describes its stages and levels according to the Country Review Report (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

Table (4.6): Description of Egyptian Education System and its Stages and Levels

Education Level	Level Definition	Description
<b>First Level (Basic)</b>	Defined as basic education that is mandatory for all children and covers the first 9 years of school.	Consists of six years of primary and three years of preparatory school.  After grade(9 students joins secondary education.
<b>Second Level (Two Types of Secondary Ed.)</b>	Type (1). Defined as the “General Secondary Education” that is the path to university education. This stage aims at preparing students for work or further education. Graduates join higher education through a process based on their results of the secondary education final exam (Thanaweya Amma).	This type of secondary education consists of a three-year general academic secondary schools.
	Type (2). Defined as “Technical Secondary Education” that provides Industrial, Agricultural, and Commercial studies.	This type is a three or five-year vocational school that is established to prepare students as technicians.
<b>Third Level (Post-Secondary)</b>	Post-Secondary Education that provides Academic Education.	Includes institutions, universities and two or four-year degree of HE institutes. Universities include teacher training colleges and separate institutes.

Source: Abdel Hamid, 2010, p.11

The Technical Secondary Education offers pre-university education in special fields such as industry, agricultural, and commerce and consists of two models: the technical education provided in three-year schools and the advanced technical education provided in five-year schools. Both models produce technical graduates



capable of joining either the industrial market workforce or the higher education institutions based on their high scores in the exit exam (OECD, 2010).

#### **4.3.3 Egyptian Higher Education System**

The higher education system in Egypt refers to the post-secondary education, as well as professional and technical education. Institutions such as universities, colleges, and institutes require enrolled students have completed their secondary education and are over 18 years old (Mina, 2001). Institutions mainly offer professional and technical education. In fact, Egypt has one of the leading education systems in the Middle East and Africa that includes a number of education universities and institutions and approximately 1.7 million teachers and employees. According to the CAPMAS figures, in the 2011-2012 academic year more than 20 million students joined different types and levels of the higher education system. This ranged from 600,000 to 700,000 graduates to postgraduates engaged in the job market. The number of students registered in pre-university education reached 17.7 million, which is one of the country's higher achievements. About 55% of those students are studying in technical industrial, agricultural, and commercial education. However, about 2.95 million students are enrolled in the academically oriented secondary education stage (Amin, 2014).

#### **Historical Background of Egyptian Higher Education**

Egyptian higher education is one of the most ancient education systems. The oldest education institute was "Oun University," established in the second millennium BC in northeast Cairo (Said, 2001). The following millennium, in about 300 BC, the education center moved to Alexandria. Subsequently, Al-Azhar University was established in Cairo during the Islamic Era in (971 – 988 AC), and became a religious university committed to offering Islamic religious education to Muslims coming from all over the world. Al-Azhar University has a wide range of branches to cover all governorates in Egypt. The university was most active in the 1970s and 2000s (Emira, 2014).

#### **Mohamed Ali Era**

Modern Egyptian education started in the era of Mohamed Ali Pasha (1798 AC), when he established many schools for engineering, medicine, and law. The country sent the clever graduates to study higher education in Europe, after which

they returned to engage in developing the national education system (Said, 2001). 1872 witnessed the establishment of *Dar El-Ulum* to offer Arabic Studies. In 1870, Ali Mubarak Pasha established the great public library *Khedivial Dar Al-Kotoub*, as well as a hall committed to public lectures concerning various branches of science. This was a meeting hall for professors and students as a cornerstone for the first Egyptian university. In fact, his ambition was to lead Egypt to be one of the most developed countries (Emira, 2014). Later on, he established the first university in 1917, before Egypt became independent in 1923 (Hatem, 1980). In 1923, the Egyptian University fell under the governance of the Ministry of Public Knowledge as a first public official university (Sekran, 2001). At the turn of the previous century, Egypt legalized the right to education in the Constitution of 1923, which announce that “primary education is compulsory for all Egyptian children” (Zaytoun, 2008).

### **Britain Occupation Era**

In 1882, the country came under the Britain occupation, and became a British protectorate in 1914. Egypt gained its independence in 1922, though Britain continued governing Egypt after 1922 and until 1952. The Revolution of July 23<sup>rd</sup> occurred in 1952 for Egyptian’s regain control of their resources and gain the real independency. After that, in 1954, the British forces withdrew from Egypt (BBC, 2013a). Nevertheless, the Suez Canal continued under the control of Britain and France until 1956 when Egypt decided to retrieve its full dominance over the Suez Canal (National Archives, 2013).

During the British occupation, people termed education “Education of the Elite” due to the high tuition fees and the low-income resources of most people, as well as how the educational efforts for the masses diminished (MOHE, 1963). On the other hand, most of the Egyptians hopes lay in educating their children for better future and to attain extra financial resources for the family (Emira, 2014). Between 1944 and 1952, there were six universities in Egypt. Five were public universities situated in Cairo (the capital city), Alexandria (north of Egypt) and Assuit (Upper Egypt), in addition to the American University in Cairo in the private sector (OECD, 2010). The government established Alexandria University in 1942 and Ain Shams University in 1950 to meet the increased number of secondary education graduates. Students were able to join the favorable university to them, as the admission was decentralized (MOHE, 1963).

### **Nasser Era (1952- 1970)**

The Revolution of July 23, 1952 terminated the rule of the King Farouk and his son Fuaad II (BBC, 2013b). The revolution resulted in radical changes in the country's perception and paid extensive attention to the social justice and the educational system. The president, Gamal Nasser (1956–1970), established social programs entitled “Education for All” and “The Right to Free Education,” through which all Egyptians had the right to be educated with free tuition, starting from basic stage through higher education stage (Emira, 2014). He amended the Constitution of 1954 to reflect this new educational policy. Accordingly, the need for more universities increased in response to the labor market requirements in diverse areas, such as engineering, medicine, science, agriculture, pharmacology, and dentistry (MOHE, 1963). This period witnessed the establishment of the first large university in Upper Egypt, Assuit University. 1961 witnessed the launch of new era of free education that allowed various people from diverse social segments to engage in the higher education system (Zaytoun, 2006).

Significantly, after the 1952 Revolution, movements continued to change the education system to become a fully socialized system. Nasser believed that the foundation of strong education system is a cornerstone in country development, so there was an urgent need to boost equitable access to higher education (Elshayeb, 2010). Education became a crucial and essential part of the country's development process (Loveluck, 2012). According to this trend, the constitution's amendment stated that education is a right for all Egyptians (Elshayeb, 2010). Universities were autonomous to decide the capacity of students they would accept with regardless of the community requirements or the labor market needs, as universities were detached from societal needs (Hatem, 1980). 1957 witnessed the flourishing of Egyptian higher education. The government adopted a policy of higher education expansion in diverse geographical areas and established remote university branches by the beginning of 1960s. Those branches became independent universities thereafter. The government established a package of national regulations to govern the new universities practices academically and administratively, which were applicable to all universities but caused a loss of autonomy.

The Egyptian programs of study became a model for all countries in the region and affected education systems in the Middle East countries, mainly due to

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hiring the Egyptian teachers (Loveluck, 2012). The expansion of government activities and the state's role in development and economic growth increased. The national economic activity led the higher education graduates to engage in the market (Zaytoun, 2008). In conclusion, the policies emerged in Nasser's era succeeded mainly in achieving six goals: increasing access to higher education, increasing the pool of a number of graduates, controlling higher education institutions, controlling curriculums, reducing academic autonomy, and depoliticizing the universities (BBC, 2013a).

### **Sadat Era (1970- 1981)**

Egypt experienced temporary economic decline and cuts to educational spending during the 1967 and 1973 Wars. However, higher education expanded during 1970s and 1980s. According to the Constitution of 1971, an article amended the right to education, stating "the state guarantees equal opportunities for all citizens." In the same year, another amendment was issued to specify that "All citizens are equal before the law, regardless of their responsibilities, duties, gender, origin, religion or belief" (Said, 2001). Indeed, the constitutional framework supported the constitutional articles for the entire education system, including legal principles such as education as a fundamental right, government as responsible for providing education for all and guaranteeing access equity, and education in public institutions as free at all stage under the control of the state. Moreover, laws passed by Parliament in 1981 made literacy a public responsibility and primary and preparatory educations as compulsory (Said, 2001).

This era witnessed shifting policy towards the privatization and liberalization of economic system, after the liberalization of the Egyptian economy took place in 1974. The policies settled in Nasser's era continued in place and practice according to the constitution of 1954, but were not completely fair in access to higher education (Emira, 2014). Establishing the National Council for Education, Academic Research, and Technology was a significant change in higher education planning and universities coordination (Hatem, 1980). This highlighted the importance of the university's role in nation's development through academic research. Additionally, the government established the councils of undergraduate studies as well as postgraduate and research studies in each university under two associate deans (Hatem, 1980). The administrative structure of universities changed to operate

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through four hierarchical levels: department, faculty, undergraduate, and postgraduate councils and the associate deans (Emira, 2014). In reference to the literature review, the globalization impact on academic practices was a result of the positive relationship with the United States politically and culturally.

### **Mubarak Era (1981-2011)**

The features of Mubarak era included achieving a controlled administrative system and rigid government regulations under which all higher education institutions operated (OECD, 2010). Privatization of all education stages arose during Mubarak era. In 1992, the gate opened for private higher education institutions legally through the Act 101. The privatization of education policy contradicts with the policy of “Free Education for All,” as it affected negatively the access to education, in addition to reducing the expenditures on the stage of pre-university education (Emira, 2014). Despite the fact that there was an increase in public expenditure on education during 1980s and 1990s, there was a decrease in the public expenditure starting from 2002. Higher education institutions did not receive sufficient funding to cope with the significant growth in the enrollment (OECD, 2010). 2010 witnessed the highest rates of poverty and unemployment that caused that unrest which led to emergence of the Revolution of 25th of January (Amin, 2014).

### **Language Used in Education**

The country official language is the Arabic, and it is the language used in education. The majority of academic programs and institutions are offered in Arabic, and the acquisition of a second language classes, such as English or French, in pre-university education is not part of the curriculum. As noted by the OECD, most students wish to study internationalized curriculum to boost their skills in the second language and gain experience (OECD, 2010).

### **Governance Approach**

Egypt's higher education system is a highly centralized system, as it lies under the control of the national government. It is the responsibility and role of the country's president and the government to authorize the establishment of universities and institutions, assign public university presidents, and employ the heads of all the principal bodies (OECD, 2010). In fact, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has the official power to make legal decisions and judgments and to supervise all

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higher education institutions including planning, policy design, and quality assurance. Only two institutions are outside the control of the MOHE, Al-Azhar University, which lies under the Central Administration of Al-Azhar Institutes, and the American University in Cairo (AUC), as a private and U.S. accredited institution (OECD, 2010). Governance system is under cooperative governmental parties. The primary governmental bodies represented are the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Economic Development (MOED), the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU), the Council of Private Universities (CPU), and the Council of Higher Institutes and Council of Technical Colleges (OECD, 2010).

### Universities and Institutions

There is a significant progress in higher education expansion to absorb the large numbers of students in Egypt. The sector consists of universities and institutions of technical and professional training. According to the Egypt Country Report, by 2007, the current education system expanded as summarized in table (4.7) (Amin, 2014).

Table (4.7): Egyptian Education System in 2007

Sector	HE institutions	Stages
Public	17 Public Universities + Al-Azhar University	Those public universities established six branches to become independent universities later on, including Al-Azhar University that offers academic degrees, and consists of faculties for Islamic studies (Theology, Law and Jurisprudence, Arabic Grammar, Astronomy, and Philosophy).
Private	17 Universities	
Public	51 non-university institutions	Including 47 middle Technical Institutes offering two-year courses and only 4 Higher Technical Institutes offer four-five year courses.
Private	89 Private institutions.	Higher education institutions.

Source: Amin, 2014, p.10

Briefly, higher education in Egypt is composed of public universities on large scale with limited public non-university institutions, a number of small private universities, and a large number of private non-university institutions. Table (4.8) presents a list of the established public universities from 1908 to 2006 (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

Table (4.8): List of Public Universities from 1908 to 2006

No.	Public University	Established in Year
1	Cairo University	1908
2	Alexandria University	1942
3	Ain shams University	1950
4	Assiut University	1957
5	Tanta University	1972
6	Al Mansoura University	1972
7	Al Zagazig University	1974
8	Helwan University	1975
9	Al Menia University	1976
10	Al Menofia University	1976
11	Suez Canal University	1976
12	South Valley University	1995
13	Banha University	2005
14	Fayoum University	2005
15	Beni Sweif University	2005
16	Kafr El-Shiekh University	2006
17	Sohag University	2006

Source: Abdel Hamid, 2010, p.16

Despite the fact that the American University in Cairo (AUC) as well as the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) have been operating as private universities for decades, the nation first legalized the private sector in 1992 in Law 101. In 1996, the first four private for-profit universities opened the door to receive applicants. Figure (4.2) shows the number of enrolled students in Egyptian higher education from academic year 2009-2010 through 2014-2015 according to the CAPMAS statistical report in 2016. The enrollment rate evidently increased annually.

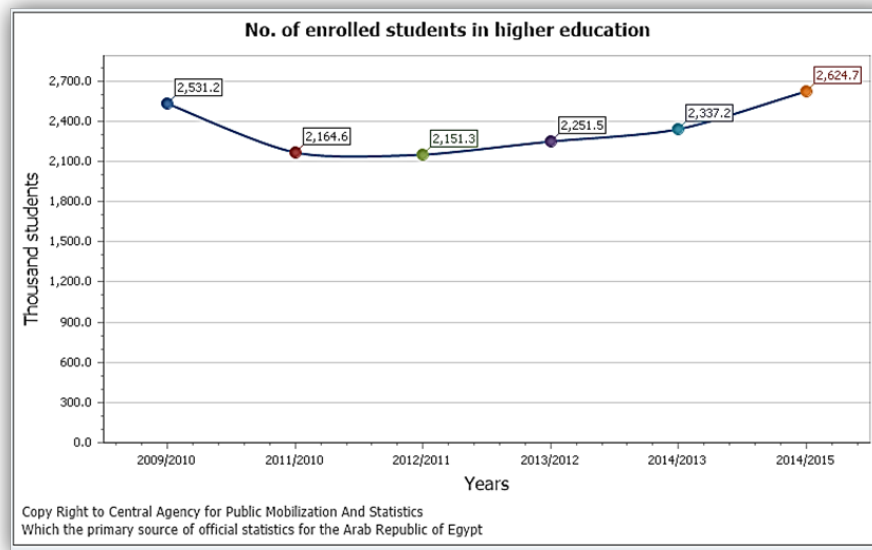


Figure (4.2): Enrolled students in Egyptian higher education from (2009-2010) to (2014-2015)  
(Source: CAPMAS, [http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/IndicatorsPage.aspx?page\\_id=6142&ind\\_id=1082](http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/IndicatorsPage.aspx?page_id=6142&ind_id=1082))

### Academic Programs

Higher education specialized institutes offer programs of study with for academic years, called middle technical institutes. On the other hand, the higher education universities, colleges, and higher institutes are offering programs of study with four, five, or six academic years depending on field of study. Regarding the post-graduate degrees, the Egyptian system provides masters and doctoral degrees that require at least from two to three years before conferring the degree. In addition to the private higher education sector, the Al-Azhar education system offers programs with the same features and program duration as public education, but it part of curriculum includes religious instruction (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

### Funding of Higher Education

In Egypt, the public education is free charges for all people starting from basic stage up to higher education based on the Constitution, and the country facilitates the funding. The Supreme Council of Universities (SCU) and MOHE are the central governance bodies for the universities. The Ministries of Finance and Planning is responsible for recurrent and investment of budget. Many higher education institutions receive complete funding from the government, including Al-Azhar University and the technical colleges (Abdel Hamid, 2010). In 2007, according to the Ministry of Finance (MOF, 2011), the expenditure on education reached to 6% of the Egyptian GDP. This low percentage of funding is less than the international standards



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and is one of the factors that led to reduce education outcomes, irrelevant curriculum, and unqualified teachers. Shortage in funding disrupted the process of developing and improving the educational system (OECD, 2010).

### **Privatization**

The government addressed problem of limited places universities through public and private sectors. Nowadays, private universities and institutions play a vital role in absorbing the huge number of higher education applicants with full cost, which is not available for low-income people. The government first introduced these privatization reforms 1992 and extended them in 2005. The role private sector is greatly debated in Egypt, as foreign funders including the World Bank and the IMF influence privatization (Mazawi, 2010). In spite of the debates, the enrolment in private sector tripled between 2000 and 2005, and expansion of the sector is as an essential step towards increasing access to higher education (Fahim & Sami, 2011). In Egypt, access to private universities is growing rapidly and may lead to wealth and regional inequalities; on the other hand, the expansion of the public sector will add greater inclusiveness. It is also essential to work on creating a good local governance atmosphere within education administration and support the strong connections between the various levels of administration. The private education sector is self-funding and dependent on tuition fees as a main source of income. However, the public education is the most popular among applicants (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

### **Qualifications Degrees**

The Egyptian higher education system offers two types of undergraduate degrees and two types of postgraduate degrees (Abdel Hamid, 2010). The undergraduate programs, such as the bachelors' degree, are offered by public and private sectors after the completion of the equivalent of four, five or six years of study. This includes Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Science (BSc) (TEMPUS, 2010). Postgraduate programs, such as diplomas, are vocational qualifications granted to students after the completion of a two-year degree programs in a technical college or private middle institute. In addition, there are other postgraduate programs, such as masters (MA) and doctoratal (PhD) degrees, awarded after accomplishing the requirements of different postgraduate programs (TEMPUS, 2010).

### **Admission Qualifications**

Admission to a higher education in Egypt occurs after 12 years of formal education in basic and secondary education. Then students sit for a general exam, known as *Thanaweya Amma* in public and private schools accept the American system schools. This exam is valid for one year, and it is the only national gateway to lead students to leave the secondary school and join the higher education, or to continue in technical and vocational education (Elshayeb, 2010).

### **Access and Equity**

Increasing the number of universities and institutions was the government's response to increase access to higher education (OECD, 2010). The government adopted a policy of higher education expansion in diverse geographical areas and established university branches at the beginning of 1960s. Those branches became independent universities thereafter. Access to higher education in Egypt is currently expanding in both the public and private sector (Buckner, 2013). Growing educational opportunities in response to demand throughout the country is a major aspect of achieving demographic growth process. Additionally, the rate of increasing demand for higher education in Egypt reflects the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) and certainly, it is expected to continue. The 2005, higher education reforms highly influenced access and equity processes. The number of students enrolled in private sector increased dramatically from 11,000 to 48,000 between 2000 and 2005 (Fahim & Sami, 2011). Starting from 2009-2010, the private sector served roughly 70,000 students (World Bank 2010; CAPMAS 2011). In Egypt, equity has always been an issue of concern. Actually, the student demographics, factors affected the access equitably to university, and the impact of recent expansion play a critical role in the access to higher education opportunities offered by two sectors. Access to public universities is highly unequal and strongly biased in favor of urban and wealthy youth who gain access to higher education at higher rates than the urban poor youth. Academic achievement is the main indicator of higher education access in the public sector. The private sector universities require private resources, which has exacerbated inequalities (OECD 2010). In reference to the national review report of (NCERD, 2015), the table (4.9) shows the number of students enrolled in private and public sectors in the 2005-2006 and 2011-2012 academic years.

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Table (4.9) Number of Students and Institutions per Higher Education Type

Higher Education Type	Number of Institutions		Number of Students	
	2005/2006	2011/2012	2005/2006	2011/2012
Public Universities	17	23	1,880,460	1,627,339
Private Universities	8	19	83,108	86,784
Public Technical Institutes (post-middle)	7	8	145,620	79,580
Private Technical Institute (post-middle)	10	11	19,633	7,957
Higher Institutes/ Academies	13	13	371,814	332,814

Source: NCERD, 2015, p.92

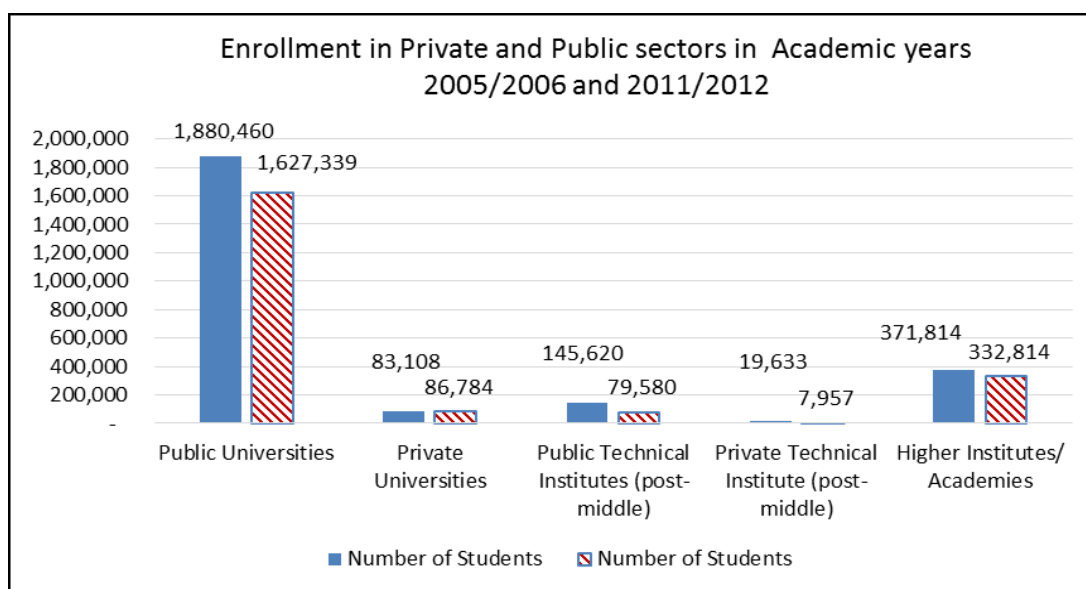


Figure (4.3): Enrollment in Private and Public sectors in academic years 2005-2006 and 2011-2012.

Source: NCERD, 2015, p.92

From the figure (4.3), obviously, there is a 70.4% increase of private universities' enrolment. However, the total number of students enrolled in private universities is still less than those enrolled in public institutions. Besides, the number of private technical middle institutes is greater than public sector; nonetheless, the number of students enrolled there is less than the numbers enrolled in technical post middle institutes.

### Quality in Higher Education

The Egyptian higher education system suffers because of the lack of funding resources, demographic pressure, and governance issues. These factors led to quality problems that consequently negatively affected the education outcomes (Schomaker, 2015). OECD (2010) attributes the shortcomings of the quality of Egyptian higher education to the following root causes:

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1. Insufficient study programs relevant to career preference
2. Insufficient preparation for job market because of curriculum irrelevancies as well as the lack of practical skills and experiences.
3. Dependence on memorizing contents of studying, passive pedagogies and lack of facilities and equipment (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

Additionally, and according to report of the Strategic Planning Unit (2008), lack of quality in higher education that leads to unqualified system and does not meet the standards is further attributed to:

1. Lack of qualified higher education teachers,
2. Lack of facilities and equipment
3. Low salaries that do not attract professional teachers

On the other hand, in 2003, the country launched an ambitious project to figure national standards for education and define the principle of total quality, as the national standards defined quality stages required for all (NCERD, 2015).

### **Accreditation**

Based on the Ministerial Decree (No. 82) for 2006, in 2007, Egypt established an accreditation system through the creation of a governmental entity and an independent agency known as NAQAAE. NAQAAE focuses on developing quality assurance (QA) and accreditation standards for all education types under the authority of the Prime Minister. NAQAAE tackles the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions, as well as verifying their fulfillment of criteria and following the standards in terms of the institutional capacity and educational efficiency. All higher education institutions go through the same accreditation process, whether in the private or public sectors (Schomaker, 2015).

### **Quality Assurance**

The Government encourages higher education institutions to improve the quality in Egypt. Starting from 2002, a project concerning improving quality of higher education planned to finish in 2007. This project resulted in a drastic change in the quality assurance system for higher education institutions and universities. Under a Presidential Decree of 2006 (Law 822006), the government established the National

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Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE). NAQAAE is responsible for external accreditation and assuring the quality of Egyptian higher education (Abdel Hamid, 2010). The new quality assurance system includes:

- NAQAAE runs a compulsory external quality assessment and accreditation for higher education institutions renewed every five years.
- The institution itself performs an internal quality assurance system reported annually about all quality mechanisms applied to institution and its academic programs.
- NAQAAE Committee executes an independent external quality assessment system depending on either a peer reviewing approach or steering Committee to assess sustainable improvement and eligibility for accreditation (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

### **International Education and Training**

The country developed its strategy for internationalization of its higher education system to open up to the international community. An array of higher education research universities are internationalizing at a fast rate. The international enrolment of students in Egypt increased dramatically in recent years. For example, the number of students in 2002-2003 was 31,193 and became around 41,590 in 2006-2007. International students represent 1.3% of total higher education enrolments. Al-Azhar University has the largest international enrolment rate, which reached 38%, followed by the private universities, which host 31% of international enrolment in Egypt. The remaining percentage of international students enrolled in Open University and higher education institutes (OECD, 2010). International students from other countries in the region or from further away come to study medicine and pharmacy programs in particular.

### **Distance Learning and Online Education**

One of the pillars of Egypt's expansion strategy is to develop the model of open universities and distance learning programs established to provide education to large sectors of population in the world. However, one of the challenges is the perception that Open University or distance learning are second rate compared to the regular program inside universities (Abdel Hamid, 2010). Briefly, higher education is

the hub of the knowledge economy. Consequently, the development of different delivery models such as community colleges, open universities, and e-learning is important to expand access to higher education.

### **Job Market and Skills of Graduates**

Nevertheless, there are modern approaches to teaching and learning to develop employability skills, because there is a necessary need to develop qualifications descriptors and pathways for individuals to build their levels of educational attainment. Indeed, Egyptian higher education needs to become more relevant to the contemporary global market (OECD, 2010). The lack of graduate skills to fulfill job market needs is at the core of country's challenges. Indeed, the pressure of globalization and neoliberalism on the job market require modern skills and experiences in Egyptian university graduates. The requirements of the international market lie in a high quality of study programs and providing modern skills that fulfill the market needs. Policy makers are seeking solutions in the light of the negative impact of a mismatch to the job market and the related issues for national stability (Schomaker, 2015).

According to the CAPMAS statistical report in 2016, which measures the country stability affects the job market and the employment rate, the unemployment rate increased and grew to 12.0% in 2011 after the Revolution of 25<sup>th</sup> of January that caused unrest. Then the rate continued to increase until 2013 and peaked at 13.2%. After the start of the positive progress in 2014, the unemployment rate decreased to 13.0%, and continued to fall throughout 2016, when it reached 12.5%. This is a positive indicator of increasing the job opportunities after the launch of the modern Egyptian national projects during the period between 2014 and 2016. Figure (4.4) presents the unemployment rate from 2004 to 2016.

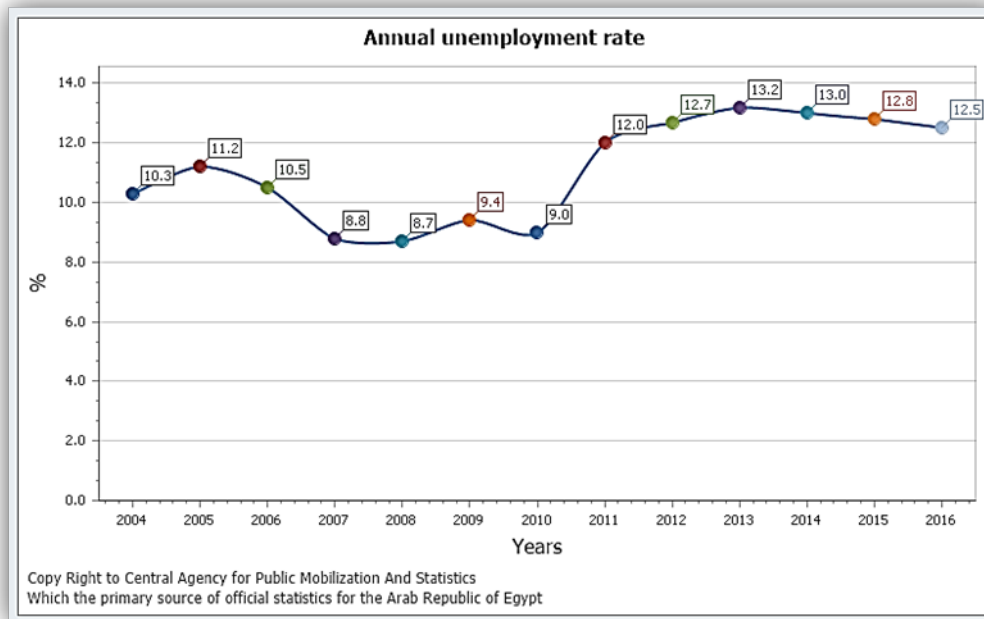


Figure (4.4): The unemployment rate from 2004 to 2016  
(Source: CAPMAS, [http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/IndicatorsPage.aspx?Ind\\_id=1117](http://www.capmas.gov.eg/Pages/IndicatorsPage.aspx?Ind_id=1117))

#### 4.3.4 Higher Education Reform in Egypt

The call for higher education reform in Egypt started in the beginning of the 1990s, especially in response to neoliberal concepts and liberal market reforms. In 1997, the Egyptian government established the National Commission on Higher Education Reform under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), with the aims to pinpoint higher education challenges and design an educational strategy. The following section discusses the education sector situation in Egypt before going through the reform policies and procedures (OECD, 2010).

##### Analysis of Sector Situation

In Egypt, the job market seeks well-educated graduates equipped with professional skills capable to fulfill job requirements and qualifications. Indeed, access to the higher education system needs further observation and the factors that influence extending access to higher education and its quality need analysis. Holmes (2008) mentioned in her conclusion that Egypt has recognized the need to reform its higher education system and should make similar financial and other commitments at the university level. The centralized system's control over the higher education sector has only resulted in problems. Nasser's higher education reforms to improve access, although well intended, also resulted in lack of higher education quality in the present

era. From these experiences, this study recommends reforms that prioritize questions of access and quality in higher education.

### **Factors and Their Impact on Education**

The main factors that affected the higher educational reform in Egypt are population inflation, globalization and culture, the economic situation, and the skills of graduates and market needs (OECD, 2010). The population growth grabbed the government's attention due to the financial issues that certainly control the budget dedicated to education. At this stage, the budget will go to priorities in the country, especially in the difficult economic situation that the country faces. Moreover, globalization and culture play a significant role in determining how people evaluate higher education process in their perception and their expectations. The economic situation indicates the governmental budget allocated particularly to higher education sector needs amending. Accordingly, this plan affects the access opportunities to country's citizens and maintains equity on society levels. Besides, the consideration of equal people rights to access higher education is a priority in admission policy design and the decision-making process (OECD, 2010).

In 2004, Egypt moved towards more liberalization of its economic system. Then, privatization improved business opportunities under private sector and started to reform public sector. Private agriculture sector was liberalized and decentralized except the area of producing cotton and sugar. Because of those changes, the industrial sector transformed from the restrictive state control and inefficient resources into a more flexible and globalized competitive system (OECD, 2010). Due to targeting modern industrial areas in 2005-2006, the need for highly skilled workers increased. Consequently, Egypt settled its priorities to increase job opportunities and eliminate poverty, as well as implement reforms including the education system (OECD, 2010). Starting from 1997 until 2006, there was a significant increase in the number of university graduates who experienced unemployment. The educated experiencing unemployment was due to a huge number of graduates that exceeds labor market requirements and the greatest number of graduates lies in the social sciences (Zaytoun, 2008).



### **Main Problems of Egyptian Higher Education**

The main problems that arise in the higher educational reforms in Egypt correlate to the country's political, social, and cultural trends and situations because of funding, quality of education, teaching methods and teacher development, status of university education, limited capacity of universities and labor market needs. Tackling these problems encourages the development of higher education process and achieving human development in the long run. Funding is a key factor for improving educational quality. Through this, the government can establish more national universities to serve the increasing number of enrollment and solve the distribution problem all over the country as well as develop the skills of academic staff and faculties. Moreover, the government will be capable to apply effective methods of teaching, modernize academic curriculums in addition to create up-to-date programs and certificates (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

### **Objectives of Higher Education Reform**

The National Conference in 2000 highlighted the main objectives of this reform, namely the goal of designing a long-term reform program during the coming seventeen years. They addressed major reform objectives in order to grant universities more autonomy to boost efficacy, justify government funding, develop faculty skills for improving education quality, reform academic curricula, make stronger management systems, and merge small institutions. The need for higher education meant increasing the available resources to create capacity for serving the growing number of learners, establishing new universities, facilitating geographical distribution, expanding universities through new branches, and establishing new institutions (OECD, 2010).

Moreover, the process involved studying the job market needs to provide different valuable skills and sufficient practices through creating new specialization fields and new technology. The reform serves the needs of the country and offers relevant education to a wider range of citizens. In light of the National Conference's aims at fulfilling a long-term reform and its main objectives, there were six projects endorsed in the period between 2002-2007. According to TEMPUS (2010), they are as follows:

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1. Technical Colleges Project (TCP)
2. Information and Communication Technology Project (ICTP)
3. Faculty and Leadership Development Project (FLDP)
4. Faculties of Education Project (FOEP)
5. Higher Education Enhancement Project Fund (HEEPF)
6. Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP)

### **Challenges and Issues Facing Egyptian Higher Education Reforms**

Financing higher education in Egypt and overall governance are major challenges in the higher educational reform. Furthermore, the centralization of governance is one of the restrictions that negatively affected the institutional effectiveness on the private and public levels. In addition to this, the restrictions on financial policies and decision making also created cause for concern; for example, the institution in general presents a recommendation and await decisions made by the Supreme Council for Universities (SCU), and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). This lengthy and uncertain process negatively influences institutional performance as a whole. These challenges are amplified in the areas of student enrolment, academic staff and academic structure, and institutional accreditation. Accordingly, the Strategic Planning Unit of the MOHE developed an approach that included a set of strategies for initiation between 2007 and 2012.

This master plan recommended that universities have explicit criteria determining enrollment capacity, have the authority to make the final decision, undertake reforms in the admission entrance process, establish more private and foreign institutions, increase capacity based on the financial policies, and determine the number of academic staff and appoint or promote after announcing staff vacancies. Finally, the master plan called for development of a legal framework for higher education that considers the distinctive role of technical education (OECD, 2010). On the other hand, the transition process of students from the secondary education to higher education and the process of joining the higher educational system may be the most significant challenges for education reform in Egypt. Students are eligible to receive free education from first grade through to university, if they successfully meet prescribed standards and pass their secondary school exit exam (*Thanawiya Amma*) (Buckner, 2012). However, this process does

not always place students in the proper university according to their capabilities (OECD, 2010).

### **The Government's Five-Year Plan**

The government has addressed the challenges that the country faces in higher education reform taking into consideration Egypt's economic and social situation. The government's Five-Year plan includes economic and social development, as well as the expectations for higher education. The plan also conducted research to justify the country's higher education system and match its needs to long-term goals (OECD, 2010).

### **Accommodating Demographic Growth**

Expanding educational opportunities, as demand rises throughout the country is a major aspect of achieving demographic growth process. In this regard, the increased gross enrollment rate (GER) reflects greater demand for higher education in Egypt, a continuing trend. The 2005 higher education reforms highly influenced the access and equity processes (Abdel Hamid, 2010). The strategic plan of the MOHE aimed at increasing the enrollment rate from 27.7% in 2006-2007 to 35.0% in 2021-2022. This plan responded to the CAPMAS estimations regarding the demographic growth. This would increase the student enrollment by 29% from 2,642,000 to at least 3,394,000 students. If the plan accordingly achieves its goals and enhances economic development, it will translate into a significant expansion of jobs opportunities (Abdel Hamid, 2010). Furthermore, Buckner (2013) emphasizes Egypt's higher education reform achievements and states that Egypt increased the number of public universities starting from 2005 while presented income-generating programs to help offset costs of expansion. According to CAPMAS (2011), there were 1.49 million students enrolled in public universities in 2000 as compared to 1.93 million in 2009. CAMPAS (2011) correlates this increase to the implementation of the expansion plane. This clearly indicates that the reform in Egypt had some success improving access to higher education and expanding institutional capacity. Indeed, the continued expansion of higher education in Egypt is one of the important aspects of the growth of access and opportunities that has led to achieving reform goals in both the public and private sectors.

### **Institutional Governance Reform**

One of the clearest problems that face policy makers is implementation of plans intended to achieve reform goals. Consequently, implementing the country's strategic plan is an urgent priority for managing the whole higher education system conceptually, financially, and structurally. According to OECD (2010), three main areas require additional reform, consideration, and action. First, the country's capacity to orient, influence, and coordinate improvements in the higher education sector needs improvement. The second area requires efforts to develop institutional capacities. Thirdly, the higher education must establish modern relationships between the government and higher education institutions

### **Stages of the Institutional Governance Reform**

The National Conference on Higher Education Reform, which was held in February 2000, adopted 25 specific reform initiatives. One was a new legislative framework for system governance to develop a legal framework for higher education that covers all sectors: public and private institutions and technical colleges. The initiative's design creates the opportunity for public institutions to become independent, autonomous corporations (OECD, 2010).

**HEEP project appraisal and goals:** In February 2000, the MOHE established the HEEP Project to create a positive atmosphere to improve higher education quality. They also intended the HEEP project to improve the efficiency of higher education system through legislative reform, institutional restructuring, creation of independent mechanisms for quality assurance, and development of systems to monitor and evaluate performance. This translated into a number of projects launched by the National Conference in late 2000. The projects all fell along the development axis and were carried out in three phases ending in 2017. (HEEP, 2016). The timeframes were as follows:

- 1- Short-term plans occurring from 2000 to 2002.
- 2- Medium-term plans occurring from 2000 to 2007.
- 3- Long-term plan plans occurring from 2000 to 2017.

The HEEP project appraisal tackled the issues of institutional freedom, guided strategic planning and resources, limited budgetary discretion, and tightened fiscal control over operation and staffing policies. The project's three major goals regarding

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the reform of institutional governance are: (1) increased university autonomy, (2) consolidated technical institutions and (3) restructured governance system and creation of the National Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (NAQAEE) (OECD & World Bank, 2010). The first goal of the HEEP project regarded reform of institutional governance and was one of the projects' major challenges (World Bank, 2008). However, the project achieved its second and third goals successfully. From this, the study can infer that the institutions did not gain their full autonomy even after achieving other project goals. Table (4.10) summarizes HEEP project phases as follows:

Table (4.10): HEEP Project Phases

Phase in Year	Achievements
2005	Finalized the first draft of the new legislative framework and cornerstones of this draft legislation in consideration to adequate funding sources: 1. Institutional autonomy 2. Appointing senior academic administrators 3. Selection, recruitment and remuneration of faculty
2007	Developing a new Master Plan by the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) of the MOHE should be performed in the period 2007-2012: Strengthen the data for policy analysis and decision-making. Links with planning Support for institutional-level strategic planning in Egypt's North and South regions. Allocate new budget to institutions to improve the H. ED education process, enhance research, and updating all institution's strategic plans.
2008	1- New faculty remuneration system depending on their performance as an elective system. 2- Universities should have autonomy.

Source: OECD & World Bank, 2010, p.110

### Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP)

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP) is one of reform projects focused on developing a well-trained academic staff to assure quality in higher education. The MOHE struggles to foster a sense of ownership over the quality of education or build a culture of excellence among academic staff. It is also challenging to initiate continuous professional development opportunities available for staff. The MOHE has undertaken various reform projects to achieve these goals. For example, the World Bank financed QAAP projects reached 188 projects during 2006-2007. QAAP is working at three levels: the university level, the faculty level, and the sector level (Abdel Hamid, 2010). On the university level, QAAP has 16 projects for establishing quality assurance centers and 17 for the development of strategic plan for quality assurance. On faculty level, QAAP has established internal

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quality assurance systems in 157 faculties countrywide. At the same time, accreditation for universities offered by NAQAAE mandates sustainability of QA centers and monitors units' activities. Finally, on sector level, there are 10 projects devoted to formulating National Academic Reference Standards (NARS). The project completed NARS for the following sectors: nursing, agriculture, engineering, medicine, basic science, pharmacy, home economics, medicine, arts & literature, and physical education.

According to Abdel Hamid (2010), NAQAAE has adopted the NARS projects for the remaining sectors and work is underway to develop their national standards (HEEP Impact Assessment Study, 2008). NAQAAE exerted efforts, with the co-operation of experts and stakeholders, to prepare academic tools, manuals, criteria, and standards. NAQAAE has completed NARS for 50 specializations; however, this is only 60% of the total NARS needed. NAQAAE developed a standard manual to define the criteria of competent faculty members. Additionally, QAAP has provided free monitoring and evaluation of the activities of QA units periodically. QAAP helped public universities prepare for the establishment of NAQAAE and is a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAHE) (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

### **Achievements of Education Policy Reform**

The two most tangible achievements between 2000 and now are in the areas of autonomous public institutions and access to higher education.

#### **(1) Autonomous Public Institutions**

The government has undertaken to work on providing additional autonomy to public institutions by developing more responsibilities for higher education institutions and changing the roles of the related administrative bodies. Applied reforms to higher education system sought the perfect performance through decentralized educational system, easing limitations, and providing more flexibility in allocating budget and decision making. They believed this would achieve the government's strategic reform goals. The government is fully aware of Egypt's higher education needs for a fundamental reform, which is very important to achieve reform goals (Abdel Hamid, 2010). This implies that closing the gap between policies and practices for higher education development leads to a sustainable and coherent

national system. The goal is to sustain institutional diversity and significant research capacity.

## **(2) Access to Higher Education in Egypt**

Student demographics affects access to universities across the country, and the impact of recent expansion plays a critical role in access to higher education opportunities. Access to public universities is highly unequal and strongly biased in favor of urban and wealthy youth, who obtain higher education at higher rates than urban middle class, urban lower class, or rural youth. Despite this, academic achievement is the main indicator of higher education access in the public sector. The private sector universities enhance inequalities because they rely on private resources (OECD 2010).

According to Buckner (2013), a number of private universities offer degrees that target the workforce and provide better learning environments and resources to students. Similarly, there is a widespread criticism of overcrowding classrooms at public universities, which some have called “unmanageable,” and inadequate facilities in general (Lindsey, 2012). The private sector plays an important role in serving the job market and extending the capacity of higher education accessibility. However, this does little to rectify inequality.

The Supreme Council for Universities (SCU) is responsible for granting accreditation to new institutions. The available records posted on the HEEP website display the project’s achievements in expanding academic access between 2000 and 2014 (HEEP, 2012). According to the data provided, the number of newly established universities nationwide is 46. These fall under different categories and across different accreditation sectors, as well as under two main funding systems. The majority were established between 2010 and 2014 (HEEP, 2014). This explains that the reform has somewhat succeeded in recent years.

## **Evaluation of the Education Policy Reforms in Egypt**

It is a matter of fact that public universities are the backbone of higher education in Egypt and generally suffer from a lack of strategic management. The government of Egypt has initiated a range of reforms to improve higher education operations. Certainly, Egypt has achieved a huge part of its plans and made remarkable progress increasing educational participation, institutional accreditation,

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funding, and distribution of new universities all over the country. Nevertheless, the country still faces problems including inequality, regional bias, a new generation of educated unemployment, and shortages of technical and professional skills. In addition, the government needs to give the institutions more procedural autonomy, impose fewer restrictions on funding, and allow more flexibility to achieve reform goals strong quality assurance, and national policy capacity. The privatization reforms initiated in 1992 and expanded in 2005 have resulted in the establishment of a new university sector governed by the economic situation and influenced by neoliberalism. According to OCED (2010)'s review of the Egyptian higher education system, there are four major challenges facing the higher education sector: (1) Limited access and opportunities for students; (2) Lack of quality of educational inputs and processes; (3) Shortages and imbalances in graduate output relative to labor market requirements; and (4) Under-developed university research proficiency and linkages to innovation.

The number of university students almost doubled between 1997 and 2007, and there are a growing number of private universities and higher education institutes. Egyptian universities encounter capacity problem accommodating the thousands of students, and in some cases, there are no opportunity for labs or seminars. Additionally, the funding programs help to solve the teacher preparation problem and provide training programs for academic staff (Abdel Hamid, 2010). According to the implications of Holmes (2008), overcrowded classrooms, poor equipment, and relying only on the basic textbook for classroom materials led to a difficult learning environment. In spite of the higher education reforms success in improving access, they have resulted in poor quality. Indeed, the enriched academic staff, learner skills, teaching methods and knowledge, and the provided resources are all the main factors that enhance the education quality. The Egyptian Country Report (Amin, 2014) indicates that despite Egypt's massive undertakings in a number of initiatives for improving the quality and relevance of education and training, the country still suffers from high rates of unemployment. For example, the country established the National Skills Standard Project in relation to developing standards and catering for worker certification based on their capabilities and competencies. Moreover, in 2010, Egypt created the Enhancing Teachers' Professionalism in conjunction with Teachers' Cadre and the Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT). Additionally, the country



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encouraged PPP mechanism to support a demand-driven reform in education, training and setting the concept for a National Qualification Framework. However, unemployment and teacher professionalism both remain pressing concerns. To conclude, the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) performed the six programs as a parts of reform plan. The HEEP projects were implemented in the public universities, except for the TCP and some projects funded by the HEEPF. The strategic plan was updated and higher education institutions were encouraged to adopt the modern national strategy and respond to the national development needs. The strategy included three major directions: legislation, national master plan for higher education, and governance (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

One of the challenges that face students is the admission to higher education. Students have to finish the secondary school and perform adequately in the centralized national exam (*Thanaweya Amma*). This type of examination ignores qualities of students and affects the validity of the selection process (OECD, 2010). The following chapter postulates the similarities and differences among the three countries and divides into sub-topics and indicators according to the conceptual and contextual frameworks.

## Chapter Five: Comparisons of Higher Education

This chapter compares the higher educational system and policy reforms in the three countries in order to assess these findings in light of their similarities and differences. In this way, Chapter Five presents the fourth stage of this study, juxtaposition, to postulate explanations for differences or similarities in light of the contexts of the three countries. According to Holmes (1981), juxtaposition identifies the similarities and differences between data sets and enables identification of the systematic variations that permit the construction of typologies and the formulation of research questions and/or hypotheses. This chapter provides an answer to the third study question: “What are the similarities and differences among the three countries in terms of their higher education reforms for improving educational quality and relevance to job market needs?” This chapter also addresses stage five of the research process also covered in this chapter through outlining findings in light of the similarities and differences isolated from the comparative analysis to extrapolate lessons learned.

### 5.1 Population Rates and Higher Education Reforms

The country’s population rate is a major factor in influencing the higher education system in terms of the expansion scales, access opportunities, outcomes, and allocated budgets. Based on this, a country’s policy makers have realized the need to restructure the education system in response to the needs of the growing population rate and competitive economy. Australia and Canada both have large territories with small populations, but Egypt is a large country with high population of 90,200,000. In comparison, as of 2016, Australia has a population of approximately 24,127,159 and Canada has a population of 36,229,000. The following table (5.1) shows the population rates in the three countries over the period from 2014 to 2016 to chart population rate changes:

Table (5.1): Population Rates from 2014 to 2016 in Australia, Canada, and Egypt

Population Rate	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016
Australia	23,673,000	24,013,000	24,127,159
Canada	35,496,000	35,821,000	36,229,000
Egypt	86,700,000	89,000,000	90,200,000

(Source: Country Economy, <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/population>)

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The above table indicates that Egypt has the highest population rate among the three countries, followed by Canada and then Australia. It is worth noting that Egyptian population rate is also growing faster than the Australian and Canadian populations and exceeds the summation of both countries' rates. In the Australian and Canadian context, both countries invest in education to increase the number of national and international students. Both countries target higher diversity in higher education. For example, in Canada, Nunavut territory encourages partnerships with other higher education institutions and focuses on online learning to improve access. People residing in Nuvavut have access to just one college; the province now offers many programs online and through distance education (Jean-Louis, 2015).

In reference to Australia's radical policy reform in 2009, the country addressed its growth and higher education systems by increasingly moving from an understanding of education as an elite privilege, to understanding mass education as a human right. The country's main objective was development. The 2009 reform reflected this mindset by adopting the concepts of liberal democracy leading to structural re-organization (Croucher & Woelert, 2015). The second aim of 2009 policy reform was to market the Australian higher education (Gillard, 2009). Since then, the Australian higher education system has grown in terms of both students and funding. This affected the funding budget because the Commonwealth has to support the doubled number of students (Higher Education in Australia, 2015). Consequently, transforming the Australian higher education policy involved balancing the incompatible agendas of equity and quality. Later on, in 2013, the Group of Eight designed a quality verification system, which involved an external and discipline-based academic peer review process. This system of benchmarking makes good sense as a form of quality assurance. On the other hand, in response to the rapid increase in population rate, the Egyptian government launched reform plans to expand access to higher education. One of the challenges the country faces is the growing population rate. It remains an issue of concern to provide equitable access to higher education (OECD, 2010). Accordingly, the expanding population led to the establishment of alternatives to higher education and technical training. Enrolment in Egypt's private sector tripled between 2000 and 2005, and the expansion of private universities is part of Egypt's agenda to increase access to higher education (Fahim & Sami, 2011). However, Egypt's higher education infrastructure cannot accommodate all enrolled

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students, resulting in overcrowding classrooms and quality challenges (Said, 2017). The study recommends that Egypt learn from the Australian experience, through which quality is assured by processes to monitor and improve educational quality. The Australian government achieved higher education expansion without sacrificing the quality of teaching and learning, including high enrolments of international students and student satisfaction (Probert, 2015). This would encourage diversity of mission within the newly expanded Egyptian private higher education sector.

**Multiculturalism:** Each of the three countries is multicultural and contains a mixture of different but compatible cultures with appreciation to people's differences and origins. The policy difference lies in the procedures designed to attract immigrants. Australia and Canada designed their system to attract people from all over the world for education and potential future immigration (DSS, 2016). Due to Egypt's location, the government has not needed to design specific policies to attract international students because cultural exchange and movement are historic. Traditionally speaking, Egyptian culture influenced their attitudes towards foreigners and promoted welcoming treatment. Egypt is the land of love and peace and has been since the Pharaonic era. Despite their differing policies, all three countries encourage multiculturalism to open the gate for international students (Amin, 2014).

### **5.2 Political System and Its Effects on Higher Education**

Australia and Canada's political system are a federation; in contrast, the Egyptian political system depends on republicanism. Historically speaking, the British colonized all three countries for various periods of time, which significantly influenced their governmental structure, particularly in Canada and Australia. In Australia, state and territorial governments are responsible for their own public health, education, roads, public land use, police, fire and ambulance services, and local governance. However, foreign affairs and higher education are within the purview of the federal Commonwealth government. The country also established the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) to have an advisory role and responsibility for allocating government funding among universities. Starting from 1993, Commonwealth began funding institutions directly (Jongbloed, 2008). In 2008, Bradley's Review of Australian Higher Education recommended an independent national regulatory body be responsible for regulating all types of

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tertiary education. Because of independent policy reforms in 2011, Australia independently established the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) via the TEQSA Act to act as a national regulatory and quality assurance agency for higher education (NIAD-UE, 2015). Despite the growing national university oversight, the state governments have considerable formal power over universities. However, their influence has reduced greatly or remains in an indirect way. Australian higher education policy reforms over the past two decades resulted in a reduction in the states' financial power over universities (Jongbloed, 2008). In Canada and Egypt, the researcher noted that historically, the political situation has directly impacted decisions and changes to higher educational trends and goals. Each regime and/or colonial government affected the roadmap of contemporary education.

According to Emira (2014), the Egyptian higher education system faced challenges in the second half of the first policy era (education of the elite) from 1944 to 1952, where the political interference affected higher education. However, in the subsequent eras, universities gained academic autonomy, and political interference has continued to decrease. Emira (2014) concludes that increasing access to higher education and limiting political interference in the academic world coincided with the governmental funding. During the second policy era (education for all) from 1952 to 1970, Egypt witnessed the implementation of Nasser's vision. Emira (2014) states that it may have been necessary to rely on the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU). However, universities lost their autonomy and started to follow national regulations for their academic, administrative, and financial matters under the 508 Act of 1954 (Hatem, 1980). The government's strategy minimized the political role of the university. Political interference was the norm since the second half of the first policy era, despite the policy shifts from elitism to socialism and subsequently capitalism during the neoliberalization of the economy (Emira, 2014).

On the other hand, the constitutional arrangement in Canada formed two governmental levels, federal and provincial to delegate authority over specific policy areas (Jones, 2004). Later on, the Flavelle Commission studied university governance arrangements and concluded that there is a surprising unanimity of views on the necessity of detaching state universities from the direct intervention of political powers (Johns, 2014). Most of plans for developing provincial higher education system began in Quebec, where education reforms were one component of a much

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broader social and political transformation. Moreover, in Ontario, the universities formed the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies to review proposals for modern graduate programs and assess the quality of current programs with the purpose of preventing provincial government's interference (Jones, 1996). Because of these reforms in Canada, higher education policy embraced a highly decentralized approach. Canada does not use a nationalized system, ministry of higher education, higher education policy, national quality assessment, or accreditation procedures (Jones, 2004). Therefore, it differs in educational management from Australia and Egypt.

### 5.3 Economic Situation and Higher Education

To compare the economic growth in the three countries, the study refers to the gross domestic product (GDP) to help to measure the national income and output of the country's economy. Reports expect all the three countries will increase their economic growth in the coming year (2018). In Canada, performance in terms of growth of real average income showed a significant improvement in labor utilization. In a sense, the marker rewarded Canada for putting in relatively more effort in terms of working time per capita. Through international standards, Canada practiced a speedy growth in output, accompanied by a flow in capital formation. The standard of living (GDP per capita) increased at the same pace in both Australia and Canada, despite a productivity gap in favor of Australia.

In 2015, the Egyptian economic growth improved, and the annual rate of GDP was around 4.4%. In 2016, the growth rate decreased to 4.3%. Recently, in 2017, the overall budget deficit dropped to 5.4% of GDP, despite the fact that the deficit was 6.4% the prior year (World Bank, 2017). In Egypt, economic activity continues to grow slightly, with investments and exports contributing positively (World Bank, 2017). Table (5.2) depicts the economic growth in all three countries over the last three years.

Table (5.2): Annual GDP Growth Rate from 2015 to 2017 in Australia, Canada, & Egypt

GDP Rate	GDP Growth in 2015	GDP Growth in 2016	GDP Growth in 2017
Australia	2.4%	2.5%	3.0%
Canada	2.4%	1.5%	2.3%
Egypt	4.4%	4.3%	4.1%

(Source: Country Economy, <https://countryeconomy.com>)

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According to the Country Economy Records, Figure (5.1) depicts the annual GDP growth rate from 2015 to 2017 in all three countries.

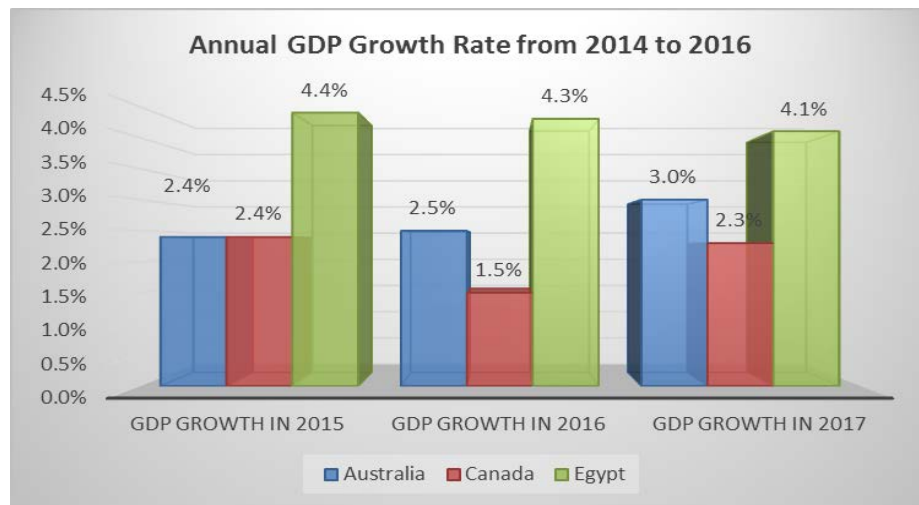


Figure (5.1): The Annual GDP Growth Rate from 2015 to 2017.  
(Source: Country Economy, <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/population>)

Chalmers (2008), an Australian author, claims the economic situation definitely influences the results of higher education reforms and considers it as an important performance indicator. However, education is not only the sum of its economic value. Scholars advocate for greater attention to educational, social, and political values that influence a country's development assessed using performance models and indicators (Reindl & Brower, 2001; Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham, 2005; Ward, 2007).

### 5.4 Universities and Institutions

From the comparative study, it is significant that there are many similarities between Australia and Canada. Both countries' membership in the British Commonwealth influences the country specifications, including education. Moreover, both countries encourage policies to facilitate multiculturalism and immigration. As discussed previously, both are federations with different allocations of federal educational oversight. Australia has a federal Ministry of Education, but Canada does not. Egypt's educational governance is more similar with Australia because both have federal oversight. In contrast, Canada considers higher education a provincial responsibility. Similarly, Australia and Egypt share thriving private and public higher education sectors, while Canada's higher educational system, though of similar quality to Australia, is mainly public. Australia has 38 public and 4 private universities; Canada, meanwhile, has over 95 universities in public and private

sectors. Egypt has 35 universities of which 17 are public, 17 are private, and Al-Azhar is governed independently. It also consists of 8 public technical colleges, 121 private higher institutes, and 22 private middle institutes. The three countries enjoy high participation rates in their higher education sectors (Australia Education Network, 2012; AUCC, 2012; Amin, 2014).

### **Over-Qualification Problem**

Over-qualification means the difference between the accomplished studies and the requirements for the job market, and this study uses the term to assess Australian, Canadian, and Egyptian higher education graduates' preparation. Internationally, the over-qualification rate among graduates is about 26% in the 50 countries studied (Drewes, 2010). Canadian scholars overviewed the debates on the rate of over-qualification and its pervasiveness (Picot et al., 1990). Additionally, Vahey (2000) refers to the National Survey of Class Structure and Labor Process in 1982 and assumes that the Canadian rate would reach 30%. Li et al. (2006) depends on the Survey of Labor and Income Dynamics and argue that the over-qualification rate is around 20% of the university degree holding labor force who take a job that requires less qualifications (Drewes, 2010).

Similarly, Egypt has witnessed a growth in the percentage of the employees with postgraduate degrees, from 0.9% to 2% between 2003 and 2006 (Amin, 2014). Significantly, the number of employees with bachelor's degree and postgraduate degrees (PhD and masters) grew to 16.6% (Abdel Hamid, 2010). The problem of over-qualification causes an unsatisfied group of employees. However, there is no literature mentioning the rate of over-qualification graduates in Australia to compare with Canada and Egypt. Encouraging people to attain education qualifications is a step to produce a well-educated generation. However, there is an urgent need to decrease the unemployment rate, and these governments have to cope with the frequent changes in the global knowledge economy. The relationship between education and the global knowledge economy was the real reason beyond the expansion of higher education systems due to the international competition for well-educated and widely skilled applicants.



### **5.5 Funding of Higher Education and Its Effect on Policy Reforms**

Private higher education in the three countries is self-funded and most private institutions are for-profit and dependent on tuition fees as the main source of income. On the other hand, the funding of the public higher education depends on the government. In Australia, the federal government is responsible for funding the public higher education system (Probert, 2015). The Australian government funds higher education institutions that must meet a range of quality and accountability requirements according to the Higher Education Support Act of 2003 (NIAD-UE, 2015). In Canada, each province or territory has direct responsibility for higher education. The federal government provides support for Aboriginal education, research and innovation, and student scholarships. The absence of a national strategy has consequences: lack of consistency of funding and lack of national monitoring mechanisms (Jeans-Louis, 2015).

In Egypt, public education is free of charge for all nationals starting from basic stage up to higher education, according to Article 19 of the Egyptian Constitution (2014: 15). The government directly funds institutions, but funding shortages disrupt the development and improvement of the educational system. This is especially true after the increased expansion of higher education across the country (OECD, 2010). Consequently, reforming the funding system is a key factor in Egyptian higher education reform and affects the policy reform results, because of lack of funding resources, demographic pressure, and governance issues lead to quality problems (Schomaker, 2015). In short, to support Egypt's development objectives, the government needs a sustainable funding strategy for higher education.

### **5.6 Enrolment in Higher Education**

One achievement of Canada's provincial policy is the establishment of the community college system and the expansion of provincial universities' capacity to achieve wider participation in higher education. This, in addition to the growth in the number of persons seeking higher education, shows a significant increase in human capital investments (Drewes, 2010). In Australia, participation rates must be adjusted because of the population growth. In 2013, there were 985,000 domestic students, while in 2014 domestic enrolments exceeded 1 million for the first time. With reference to World Bank data, the Australian enrolment rate increased considerably in

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the higher education sector. Over the last decades, Egypt has achieved noteworthy progress in terms of educational enrolment at all stages; the total enrolment in pre-university education is 17.7 million students, of which 2.95 million students enroll in the secondary stage. Around 55% of students in secondary stage enrolled in technical, industrial, agricultural, or commercial education. Table (5.3) shows the three countries' different participation rates in higher education from 2009 to 2014.

Table (5.3): The Participation Rate in HE from 2009 to 2014

Country	2009	2012	2013	2014
Australia	76,765,37323	85,413,91754	86,554,55017	90,3065033
Canada	1,113,5100	1,261,82001	1,284,35002	2,054,9430
Egypt	29,948,58932	27,618,31093	30,31732941	31,678,98941

Source: World Bank, 2017

To summarize, comparing the participation rate indicates the expansion of higher education and increasing access opportunities in Australia, Canada, and Egypt, which is an indicator of the growing awareness of the economic and social benefits of higher education. The Egyptian higher education system faces problems with enrolment rates for institutions, as it has the largest population in the Middle East and North Africa (El Hassan, 2013). According to Helal (2007), the expected growth in Egyptian enrolment rate is 3% per year. Therefore, the rate could increase from 28% in 2006 to be 35% in 2021. Indeed, one challenge for higher education institutions is to not only to cope with the growing demand through expanded program offerings, but also to adapt the offered academic programs and the quality of teaching and learning to fulfill the market needs of qualified persons (OECD, 2010). To sum up, meeting this growing demand with high quality academic offerings will be a key indicator of successful education reform programs in Egypt.

### 5.7 Governance Approach

Australia has a federal Ministry of Education, but Canada does not, despite the fact that both countries are federations; Egypt has a Ministry of Higher Education. The Australian federal government has significant financial and policy responsibility for higher education; however, state and territorial governments hold the majority of legislative responsibility. The Australian federal government administers higher education through the Department of Education, Science, and Training, responsible

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for Australian higher education policy development and program administration. The Commonwealth provides the majority of public funding. Conversely, the most remarkable feature of the Canadian system is its decentralization. The country has no federal office or department of education. Canada succeeded within a highly federated system, which features significant diversity, particularly with respect to issues of language and country of origin (Johns, 2014). The Egyptian higher education system is highly centralized and governed through a multilevel governmental structure and has relationships among the relevant governmental authorities: the president, institutions' boards, intermediate entities, and governing authorities and councils (OECD, 2010). The Prime Minister has the lead in policy making, analyzing policies, and planning in cooperation with the Information and Decision Support Centre for the Prime Minister and Cabinet of Ministers. Furthermore, other units report to the Prime Minister and contribute to the Ministry of Education's decisions (OECD, 2010). To summarize, even though Australia epitomizes hard federalism and Canada conversely represents a highly decentralized and uncoordinated form of federalism, both governments' structures positively influenced international education policy development. This has led to a centralized and top-down policy approach that limits the involvement of state and other organizations and has made international education a critical driver of educational policy reforms (Harman, 2005). This is especially the case with the recruitment of international students (Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013). In short, Australia and Canada differ despite the fact that they belong to the same family of federalism. This does not mean that Egypt can adapt the Canadian decentralized governance system. Egypt has different circumstances such as high population rate, lack of funding resources, and a huge number of universities and institutions. It would be better to learn from the centralized Australian governance system.

### **5.8 Access, Equity, and Quality in Higher Education**

Over the last decade, the studied countries accomplished the development of quality assurance systems to varying degrees. Modern systems and approaches have substituted the previous framework (OECD, 2013). Australia successfully expanded its higher education without losing the quality of teaching and learning areas. Reviewers mentioned a collection of indicators that prove the consist quality of

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education, such as the high enrolments rates of international students, stable enhancements in student satisfaction, stable retention rates, and continued improvements in the global rankings (Probert, 2015). Australia attracts the most international students due to its high educational quality (NIAD-UE, 2015). The Canadian higher education expansion is one of the remarkable achievements in access to higher education. It increased the enrolment, particularly in Ontario where the number grew from 10,000 students in 1960 to around 400,000 students in 2007. This is consistent with similar developments across Canada (Jean-Louis, 2015). The expansion of higher education institutions did not affect the quality of education because the Canadian context considers quality assurance as the education standards recommended by institutions, professional organizations, and governmental authorities (EP-Nuffic, 2011). Improving the quality of education process depended on the provinces, because there is no national body playing a role in the country's quality assurance process. Consequently, each province has its own quality assurance system. Regarding equity, the expansion has benefited females and has contributed to Canada's gender equity. Female participation grew from 75,000 in 1966, to 465,000 in 2006 (EP-Nuffic, 2011). In Egypt, expanding educational opportunities to meet national demands throughout the country is a major aspect of achieving the demographic growth process. However, open access to higher education institutions with various professions and fields produced a huge number of graduates facing an unemployment problem. Nowadays, university graduates represent the largest segment of the country's unemployment statistics have raised concerns about the need to strengthen the relation between higher education and the labor market needs. Higher education systems' expansion affected the quality of education negatively.

### **5.9 Accreditation and Quality Assurance**

Accreditation is one of the most effective ways for higher education institutions to improve the quality of their provided services. The standards guide accreditation attainment and quality enhancement activities, covering the details of institutions daily processes including the offered services and programs (OECD, 2014). Australia, Canada, and Egypt understand the purpose of the quality assurance systems in adding a competitive advantage to their respective higher education system. QA helps universities and their sub-faculties and institutions strengthen

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educational quality, provide regular interactions between the program and universities, and encourage exchanges with other countries. Australia built its QA system starting from 1990s, when the government adopted the view that quality is assure able through policies and procedures to monitor and improve quality (Probert, 2015). Accordingly, Australia has instituted broadened guidelines to improve the quality of education and maintain current quality levels. In Egypt, the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) handles the issue of the institutional accreditation for public universities. There are hold-ups, and it is not effective for the faculties and institutions associated with the universities to receive accreditation from the same national authority. This study indicates that NAQAAE pays more intensive attention to accrediting the faculties of the public universities than the universities itself, which caused restrictions for public institutions.

Another issue regarding the Strategic Plan of Higher Education (2002-2017) is that it did not stress on the obligatory nature of public university accreditation. Instead, it mandated that faculties receive national accreditation. Briefly, the government objectives for the reform were the readiness of all higher education institutions for national accreditation, which is neither effectively implemented nor required for all the higher education institutions and faculties despite the national accreditation system established in 2006 (OECD, 2010). In reference to El Maghraby (2012)'s study, universities have not approached the organization for accreditation. By late 2011, no university received the national accreditation, although NAQAAE had existed since 2006. The American University in Cairo (AUC) was the first university to receive the Egyptian National accreditation from NAQAAE in 2011. In 2012, only 18 higher education institutes out of 400 received accreditation. The Egyptian government is currently struggling to improve the national education system as a whole.

In Australia, the state and territory governments are tackling the administration of university legislation, accreditation of new universities and higher education courses offered by non-self-accrediting institutions, and auditing of university financial statements. State governments established public universities as self-accrediting institutions apart from the Australian National University. Significantly, the accreditation process and quality assurance systems are on the

agenda of higher education policy reform in most countries. This reveals an international trend towards improving the quality of higher education system to prepare graduates to become competent practitioners and equipped for job market requirements.

### **5.10 International Education**

The pressure to succeed in a competitive neoliberal world is central to education reform; nowadays, students define success as the increase in number of international student enrolments. Australia and Canada aim to grow their share in the enrolment rate of international students. Despite the challenges that Egypt faces in improving its higher education system, the country has its share of international students because of its long history of providing education to students across region. International students in Egypt have increased to consist of 1.3% of all higher education enrolments (Coombe, 2015; Xu, 2009; OECD, 2010). Australia was one of the first nations to rapidly utilize the recruitment of international students and achieve a massive level of success in attracting a large numbers of international students. Internationalization of higher education is a key to Australia's success story, because Australia is one of the top countries to absorb large numbers of international students. The country ranks the third in the rate of the enrolment of international students. On the other hand, Canada ranks the seventh globally in the rate of international students' enrollments (NIAD-UE, 2015). In Canada, overseas development assistance (ODA) is the initial feature of Canadian internationalization. Canada commissioned two key reports in 2009, the first of which is entitled "Economic Impact of International Education in Canada" and quantified the economic impact of international students. It spoke to the benefits of attracting international students on the Canadian economic situation. Additionally, the second report, "Best Practices on Managing the Delivery of Canadian Education Marketing," addressed the need for Canada to coordinate its marketing efforts to attract its fair share of the international student. The report proclaimed Canada's ambition to replace Australia as a hub for international students (Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013). Egypt also has a long history of hosting international students, especially those from other Arab and African countries. The enrolment of international students in Egypt increased exponentially in recent years. For example, the number of students in 2002-2003 was 31,193 compared to 41,590 in

2006-2007(OECD, 2010). To conclude, marketing of higher education and focusing on attracting more international students became a key driver of country's prosperity through ensuring reputable quality of education.

### **5.11 Neoliberalism, Job Market and Skills of Graduates**

In a neoliberal world, the call for higher education reform mainly tackles two essential issues: graduate skills and quality of education to boost country's economic prosperity and social welfare. The job market is changeable from day to day to adapt to prevailing economic requirements, such as technology and international knowledge production. There is a global trend for governments to motivate higher education institutions to strengthen their relationships with the larger socio-economic community (Munro, 2014). In response to this, governments implemented modern policies to boost innovation and productivity under healthy circumstances with equality and effectiveness. This is a modern trend that is defined as the concept of market framing, not only in reference to connecting higher education to business or industry, but also to restructuring higher education institutions as a business organization (Cowen, 1991). This trend builds strong ties between institutions and job market requirements to prepare the learner for their future career life.

The Australian higher education system has high student satisfaction and graduate employment outcomes. The country succeeded in having only 3% of bachelor degree holders unemployed, and only 8% of Australians are not post-school qualified. As a result, the global job market accepts Australian qualifications (Australian Government, 2016). In contrast, the Egyptian market is currently incapable of offering sufficient opportunities to employ the increasing number of graduates. Accordingly, it is the time for change. The steady decline in quality of Egypt's public university system requires thorough reform, as well as an adjustment in funding allocation and finding other resources for funding higher education. According to the 2017 statistics, Egypt's population rate is growing and the country faces a difficult economic situation. Those two factors influence the improvements trials adopted by the system as a whole. According to Becker (2008), the pressures of globalization motivated various countries to apply major changes in relationships between the country, the market and higher education. Australia and Canada have successfully made these changes, while Egypt is struggling to do so. However,

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observing the Canada context indicates universities have different characteristics and educational goals. In 2012, learners from more than 180 countries studied in Canada, due to the attractiveness of the Canadian education systems (Jean-Louis, 2015). Canada is a leader in higher education and enjoys numerous advantages as an excellent destination and a global center of innovation, research and development, skills development, and other advanced skills for employment. Additionally, Canada announced its Global Markets Action Plan in 2013, which includes international education as one of sectors where Canada enjoys a strong competitive advantage. The plan intends to prepare the country for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and ensure its future prosperity. Canada plans to maintain the advantage for attracting students. Accordingly, its strategy is to ensure there is flexibility to accommodate innovative programs in developing markets (Capano, 2014).

### **5.12 Unemployment Rate and Higher Education Reforms**

The unemployment rate refers to the percentage of people not currently engaged in the labor market. Unemployed persons are those who currently do not work despite the capacity to do so. In many countries, the unemployment rate results from the large number of graduates who are not qualified enough to fulfill the job market needs. Successful higher education systems can solve this problem by developing new programs that boost the professional skills of graduates and open the door for them to join the market. The unemployment rate becomes a measurement tool that provides insights into a country's economic capacity and unused resources. The number declines when the economy expands, and it usually increases due to the slow economic activity (OECD, 2010). According to table (5.4), which depicts the unemployment rate from 2012 to 2016, Australia had the lowest rate compared to Canada and Egypt. Egypt's lowest unemployment rate occurred in 2016 at 12.6%, but it is still the highest rate among the three countries. In 2016, Australia and Egypt's unemployment rates decreased which is positive indicator of the increasing the enhancement of the economic situation and increasing the investments opportunities. Table (5.4) presents the unemployment rates from 2012 to 2016 in the three countries.



Table (5.4): The Unemployment Rate from 2012 to 2016

Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Australia	5.2	5.7	6.1	6.1	5.7
Canada	7.3	7.1	6.9	6.9	7
Egypt	12.7	13.3	13.2	12.8	12.6

(Source: Focus Economics, <https://www.focus-economics.com/indicators>)

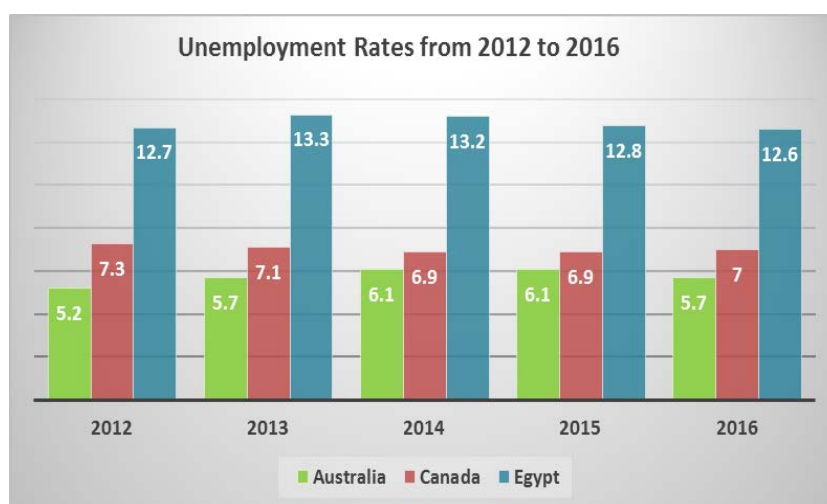


Figure (5.2): The Unemployment Rate from 2012 to 2016.

(Source: Focus Economics, <https://www.focus-economics.com/indicators>)

According to the Figure (5.2), Egypt recorded the highest unemployment rate during the period of 2012-2016, despite the fact that there was progress in reducing the overall unemployment percentage. In reference to the CAPMAS (2012), unemployment among university graduates accounts for about 40% of the overall unemployment. Employability is a problem in higher education in Egypt and it is a reason to discuss comprehensive educational reform (Abou-Setta, 2014). On the other hand, Canada tried to create higher education value and relevancy. Governments and institutions, including their student, are concerned about the employability of graduates. Therefore, colleges and universities supported the idea of a “liberal education” focused on skills, competencies, and relevant programming. Colleges focused on employability, but faced challenge of growing pressure related to finances and reputation. In some jurisdictions, it was difficult to reduce the number of programs not related to job market. Nevertheless, Canadian employers seek critical thinking, cultural awareness, teamwork and strong communication and problem solving skills. The very focus on a liberal education and this pressure plays out in decisions and funding allocations (Jean-Louis, 2015).

### 5.13 Higher Education Policy Reforms in the Three Countries

According to Koch and Fisher (1998), the literature of higher education reveals that there are many issues facing higher education institutions. They include challenges associated with curriculum; experiential learning; funding; allocation of faculty time, teaching, faculty status and tenure; student access; distance learning; the use of technology; restraining cost increases; relationships with business and government; governance; leadership arrangements; faculty compensation; and intercollegiate athletics (Breneman, 1995; Fisher & Koch, 1996; Harvey, 1995; Massy, 1996).

### Comparative Summary

The following comparison of higher education policy reform among the three countries during the past decade is summarizing higher education issues, reform goals, challenges, achievements and results.

#### Higher Education Higher Education Main Issues

Australia	Canada	Egypt
Equity has always been an issue of concern in Australia in 1990s.	The quality of Canadian higher education that has emerged as a vital issue in many provinces during the previous decade	(1) Increasing unemployment rate and (2) unutilized youth enthusiasm and power as well as (3) unfulfilled the job market requirements. High unemployment rates of graduates, a limited public sector, and dominance of private sector.

#### Higher Education Reform Aims

Australia	Canada	Egypt
May 2009 by the Australian Government with an aim of Transforming Australia's Higher Education System policy, outlining a comprehensive reform agenda for the following 10 years.	The academic integrity and governance autonomy of the individual institutions and programs must be protected. Moreover, the responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance has to be taken under the institutions management.	Improving the efficiency of higher education system through legislative reform, institutional restructuring, the creation of independent mechanisms for quality assurance and the development of systems to monitor and evaluate performance

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### Higher Education Reform Goals

Australia Reform Goals	Canada Reform Goals	Egypt Reform Goals
Transform the scale, potential and quality of all universities All Australians have the opportunity to develop. Improving research as a mechanism to country development. Enhance higher education quality to remains 'globally competitive'	Facilitate funding people. Provide equal opportunity. Increase enrolment. Attract more international students. Prove the quality of Canadian education.	(1) Increase university autonomy, (2) permit the consolidation of the technical institutions and (3) the structuring of governance system as well as create the National Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (NAQAAE)

### Higher Education Reform Challenges

Australia	Canada	Egypt
Achieving agendas remains the challenge, while the sector agreed in principle with the need to achieve both equity and quality agendas.	Accessibility, unstable institutional boundaries & categories,  Quality and funding.	Financing of higher education  Governance

### Higher Education Reform achievements

Australia	Canada	Egypt
Transforming Australia's Higher Education System policy is incompatible agendas of equity and quality. The quality assurance system is more powerful than accreditation systems that focus on inputs rather than student learning outcomes.	-Creating Centers of Excellence across Canadian universities -The investments in network centers of excellence. -Increase in access expansion of higher education combined with growing satisfaction and completion rates.	The achievements were most tangible in two important areas:  (1) Autonomous public institutions (2) Access to higher education in Egypt.

### 5.14 Discussion and Conclusion

As this comparative study is concerned with higher education policy reforms in terms of improving quality and increasing relevancy to job markets, the study concludes that in the three countries, governmental policy focuses on increasing access to higher education and improving quality of the system through launching reform goals and plans. The reason is to serve the increasing population and reflect the belief that providing higher education improves country's prosperity. However, the establishment of additional higher education institutions resulted in financial and quality difficulties in Egypt and Canada, due to the government intervention, revenue problem, management issue, and/or educational quality problem. In Australia, there is an agreement that higher education participation rates should continue to grow with equitable access. Australia achieved the expansion of higher education without

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sacrificing educational quality (Probert, 2015). On the other hand, the Canadian context considers quality assurance as the education standards. That is why the expansion of higher education institutions did not affect the quality of education (EP-Nuffic, 2011).

Australia, Canada, and Egypt built a strong system of quality assurance and accreditation as a common reform plan to improve higher education quality. In Egypt, because of the National Conference on higher education reform held in February 2000, there were 25 reform initiatives included the creation of NAQAEE. Since 2002, Egypt has established its quality assurance system, including an internal quality assurance system operated by individual higher education institutions and an independent external system based on peer review. As a result, the National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (NQAAC) was formed to look into establishing the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) (NAQAAE, 2013). NAQAEE verified institutional self-evaluations with regard to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness and specific standards that it identified (OECD, 2010).

The higher education reforms in Egypt improved access opportunities; however, they have resulted in quality problems (OECD, 2010). On the other hand, in Australia, the government sought quality of higher education since 1980s during the Dawkins reforms, and the establishment of Australian quality assurance system was in response to develop and sustain high standards of teaching and learning in higher education. From these initiatives, it is inferable that Australia built the quality assurance system and the standards first and then launched the higher education expansion plan by increasing access and the establishment of new non-university and private higher education providers. Indeed, the implementation of the quality assurance system should not be predominantly based on external demands. Rather it should focus on improving the self-evaluation procedure to increase faculty autonomy and enhancing educational quality (Weusthof, 1995).

According to Probert (2015), Australian universities have a long history of regulating and reviewing the quality of the educational programs they offer. The Australian government policy on external quality audits has played a key role in improving systems and processes for quality assurance. Canada and Egypt need to learn from the experiences of the Australian higher education system in quality

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assurance and accreditation, as well as university regulations. Both countries seek position as a place where students can pursue the highest quality of education and improve their economic opportunities. According to the context, the Canadian education system maintains its traditional organization that is why higher education reforms focused on learners' ability and outcomes to guarantee country's future prosperity. Canada recently branded its higher education system with the goal of increasing its market share of international students. Canada has developed a strong, innovative and successful sector, encompassing many institutions with a global reputation for teaching, research, and community service (Jean-Louis, 2015).

The Ranking Report of Universitas 21 (2016) mentioned in this study's first chapter, the overall results over three years (2014-2016) shows Australia ranks tenth and Canada ranks the ninth. Accordingly, Canada has consistently performed better than Australia. On the other hand, the findings of this study proved that, Australia has a stronger quality assurance system and much to be learned from its experience in improving higher educational quality. As a result of ranking and improving quality of teaching and learning, the enrolments of international students has increased (Probert, 2015). The U21 Ranking (2016) mentions that Australia ranks third and Canada's ranks seventh in the output module that measures a group of attributes, including participation rates, research performance, the existence of world-class universities, and employability of graduates. This module indicates higher education quality and proves Australia achieved greater levels of higher education quality than Canada.

Regarding the governance approaches, the most decentralized approach in Canada has led to a complex arrangement of provincial and territorial higher education systems. This governance approach resulted in a range of challenges to Canadian higher education related to the absence of quality assessment mechanisms, policies, standards. However, the Canadian approach has led to high participation rates (Jones & Weinrib, 2011). On the contrary, the highly centralized approach in Egypt has led to complicated problems in access, university autonomy, management, corruption, and lack of educational quality (OECD, 2010).

In reference to the advantages of decentralization approach, higher education sector around the globe received an increased institutional autonomy. Therefore, Egypt launched a reform plan tackling this issue. The HEEP project's appraisal

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tackled the issues of institutional freedom, strategic planning and resources, limited budgetary discretion, tight fiscal control over operation, and staffing policies. The three goals of this project related to governance reform in higher education: to increase university autonomy, support consolidation of technical colleges and the structure of governance, and establish the National Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (OECD, 2010). Although the HEEP produced at least some guidelines and materials reviewed by external examiners according to international quality assurance standards, there are still a lot of examples which could be tracked (Osman, 2011).

In Australia, the centralized approach to higher education was largely successful. The country's ranking increased and it improved the quality of teaching and learning contributing to the growing enrolments of international students by thirteen-fold during the period from 1998 to 2014 (Probert, 2015). Australian institutions offering Australian qualifications must meet the quality assurance requirements under the TEQSA Act and the regulatory requirements of the country in which they are operating. According to NAID-UE (2015), TEQSA was established under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 as the independent, national regulatory and quality assurance agency for the higher education sector in Australia responsible for registration of higher education providers; accreditation of higher education courses; quality assurance; and dissemination of higher education standards and performance. TEQSA presented the effectiveness of centralized governance to maintain and enhance quality, diversity, and innovation in the Australian higher education through modernized and nationally consistent higher education regulatory arrangements.

The Australian higher education system seeks to demonstrate the quality of its teaching and learning and to assure the students of the value of their growing investment in this sector. It is noteworthy that the admission process to higher education in Egypt is one of the challenges that face students is the transition from secondary education to higher education. Students have to finish the secondary school and perform adequately in the centralized national exam (*Thanaweya Amma*). This type of examination does not consider the qualities of students and affects the validity of the selection process (OECD, 2010). The Australian experience in this matter is remarkable, in some cases the undergraduate admission is based on the

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Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). Institutions use ATAR to rank and select students for admission to higher education courses and to measure student achievement (NAID-UE (2015)). In other Australian admission processes, the students graduated from pre-university education will join tertiary programs, which are highly specialized to offer intensive study at an advanced level. The student's tertiary entrance rank or index determines the entry to higher education. Each state or territory has tertiary admissions centers to coordinate admission to the universities. The tertiary entrance subjects have common outcomes; however, these subjects differ in all states and territories (Jongbloed, 2008). This entrance programs need to be discussed in Egypt to provide better admission process.

To conclude, lack of funding resources, demographic pressure and governance issues are the real factors that led to quality problems in most countries including the three comparative cases. Unemployment rates, used to measure the match between education system outcomes and the required skills in the job market (OECD, 2010), showed the applicability of degrees in the job market. The ranking shows that the excellence of higher education system attracts more international students to Australia and Canada. In Canada, reforms and competition led to apply blended learning, with an increasing focus on the use of open education resources. Canada is a leader on providing online and distance education worldwide in order to demonstrate the support of policy makers and institutional leaders for innovations in the application of technology (Jean-Louis, 2015). In Egypt, as a result of reforms, the Ministry of Higher Education announced recently that to improve higher education institutions performance and quality assurance the ministry achieved the following goals between 2014- 2017 (MOHE, 2017): Funding 140 universities to encourage obtaining the Egyptian national accreditation from NAQAAE. Furthermore, increasing the number of public universities that received the certificate of accreditation and quality by 90% from 4 to reach 87 universities. The fast swift to modern changes in the neoliberal world would help Egypt in improving the whole education system. According to the Egyptian Country Report (Amin, 2014), it is urgent that Egypt introduces access to employment as a leading priority in education and training systems. This begins with promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment in early stages of education. One option would be learning from the Australian experience in developing a national qualification system to integrate all levels, allowing recognition and transparency of

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qualifications and adopting career guidance and counseling systems at the national level. The country needs to improve the educational quality and training to bridge the gap between graduate skills and the job market needs. Improving the social and professional image of VET by creating attractiveness, quality, and clear career paths would contribute to solving the addressed problems.



## **Chapter Six: Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

The final chapter of this comparative study covers the sixth stage and answer the fourth research question: “What are the lessons learned from the comparison of higher education reforms in the three examined contexts and what are the recommendations concluded?” The lessons learned help all concerned parties improve the whole system, in terms of emphasize quality and responsiveness to markets requirements.

### **6.1 Lessons Learned**

As discussed in the literature review, there is considerable evidence on the intention of Australia, Canada, and Egypt to improve the higher education system through examining system policies and design modern strategies to eliminate education problems. Significantly, the three countries planned for higher education reforms in terms of improving educational quality effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, the comparative cases indicate the policies’ struggled to achieve the required results by realizing the objective of improving education quality, avoiding negative effects of institutional self-governance, learning from other countries experiences, and referencing past successful experiences. Their common reform initiatives focused on building a quality assurance system, accreditation, improving learning and teaching practices, and measuring the influence of their quality assurance system. The issues of quality control and assurance have become a major focus of the three country cases’ attention and for most governments worldwide (Ramadan et al., 2011).

### **Quality in Higher Education**

The length of the quality assurance process in Egypt disrupts improvements in Egypt. Similarly, each Canadian province has its own system of higher education quality assurance and every province applies different approaches and provides guidelines to audit given programs (CICIC, 2010). From the study, it is a lesson to learn that the effective quality assurance system and accreditation strengthen the education quality and maintain sustainable development. Therefore, there is much to be learned from Australian policy and practice reforms and from its quality regimes. Due to the fact that Australia measures the success of education systems by the achieved educational outcomes and their impact on economic and social progress,

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Egypt can learn much from the approach. Knowledgeable society requires a capable, highly qualified and innovative labor force. The role of policy and decision makers is to prioritize excluding inequitable educational outcomes and strengthen quality assurance system internally in the institution and externally from the governmental authoritative agency (Probert, 2015).

In order to compete internationally, improving the quality of higher education and research is a priority for the government that are seeking economic growth and nation development, which is currently interpreted into an international knowledge economy (Oxford, 2015).

In terms of quality of education, the Council of Ministers of Education established a Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework that declared the estimated competencies related to each academic degree. This process emphasized the required outcomes through design degree standards. Discussing quality focuses on the development and assessment of learning outcomes (Jones, 2014). One of the lessons apparent in these countries experiences is that there is a little historical evidence to support the argument that greater competition and less regulation will improve educational quality (Probert, 2015).

As discussed in the literature review, the main trend in higher education reforms in most countries is to effectively and efficiently achieve high education quality. Accordingly, it is essential to establish a culture of quality over quantity in higher education that involves all the concerned parties (i.e. education providers, learners, employers, and academic administrators) to guarantee that the different perspectives and requirements are incorporated (Bobby, 2014).

### **Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

According to Probert (2015), Australian universities have very strong internal processes of quality assurance, designed on disciplines of peer review and academic judgment cultures. During the past two decades, the quality of Australian higher education assured and improved through building the self-regulating system of universities and institutions. This was a way to improve the effective institutional quality review processes. Additionally, this process included the external accreditation of programs by professional bodies legal and accessibility obligations supervised by bodies such as the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

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and by state/territory regulators, and the various forms of external quality auditing. Besides, Commonwealth oversight of a wide range of performance data linked to funding agreements and currently underpinned by the power of the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) to register and de-register providers. All education systems are moving towards excellence and equity in education and in higher education in particular. Internal institutional quality assurance is the foundation of quality in education as a whole system. The higher education institutions are the major agent to assure and maintain the quality assurance, as those institutions have created their own systems and have to prove that they achieved the required objectives and goals according to their mission and vision.

### **Quality Audit system**

A quality audit is an urgent procedure to check on institutions effectiveness in achieving its goals (Harvey & Williams, 2010a). For instance, there are indications of higher education improvements resulted from the auditing process performed by The Australian Universities Quality Agency. The external quality audit enhances higher education institution's capability to develop. Adding to that, the creation of a program of Learning Outcomes Assessment in order to assess, track and improve the skills development performance of higher education institutions. In this program, the governmental bodies should cooperate to establish a national learning outcomes assessment program.

Australian experience in auditing system that started in 2001 is a lesson to learn. The AUQA conducts an external quality audit. The Australian government established AUQA as an independent body to conduct to institutions' whole audits, based on self-assessment and site visits, and focusing on the adequacy of an institution's quality assurance arrangements. It provides public reports on the outcomes of these audits. The AUQA also has the power to audit the processes of accreditation authorities and report based on its criteria.

### **Neoliberalism and globalization impacts**

Neoliberalism and globalization have had reflective influences on social values and institutions that are shaping education policy and discourse. As a result of neoliberalism, education is viewed as a competitive advantage between countries and worldwide markets. According to (Kandiko, 2010), the call for higher education

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reform to cope with the adaptation of neoliberalism involves decreasing the financial pressure on public bodies. It would be effective in case of the governments that promote the establishment of liberal market, free trade, and decrease governmental interference in the economy. Such governments also need to avoid to the most negative impact of neoliberal policies that attack faculty roles and responsibilities. In the latter case, neoliberal practices in higher education could disturb the interaction between institution and students (Marginson & Considine, 2000). The study conducted by Norton & Cakitaki (2016) finds that the Australian State Governments established Public Universities as self-accrediting institutions apart from the Australian National University. This study advocates for enhancing the quality of offered programs, specifically the curricula and courses that boost cognitive skills and critical thinking, in addition to formulating assessment practices and needed teaching quality in response to globalization and neoliberal education.

### **University Programs and Job Market**

Brand III (2005) asserts that curriculum design should be revised and updated frequently to meet learners' needs in the changing job market. Higher education institutions are struggling to produce their desired outputs and achieve distinctive goals. The outcomes and goals depend heavily on the government's agenda. For example, most countries agree they need to promote student success, improve learner outcomes and experiences, widen learner knowledge, enrich skills, boost learner's ability to engage into society, provide opportunities to traditionally disadvantaged learners (i.e. minorities, economically disadvantaged and adults learners), enhance learners' belief in the diversity on campus life and embed the required employability skills in the modern curriculum (OECD, 2013).

Colleges and universities in Australia and Canada communicated with market employers in order to design academic programs to meet employer's needs, and they might develop programs tailored to employer needs (Wilcox, 2016). Therefore, Canadian colleges and universities supported the idea of a "liberal education" as focusing on skills, competencies and relevant programming (Jean-Louis, 2015). Canada considers driving innovation and excellency is achievable, if the government boosts research and innovation. This would produce a new generation of scholars and

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productive researchers. Research productivity raises the ranking level of universities and adds value to their reputations (Oxford, 2015).

In order to achieve high rates of economic growth, the country has to boost the quality of graduates' skills first. This would be the major indicators of country's progress (OECD, 2010). In this regard, the Australian experience in providing Vocational and Technical Education (VET) is a remarkable example. VET focused on providing skills for the labor market in order to link students' learning to job market. In Australia, VET programs are the first choice for 70% of youngsters (Jongbloed, 2008).

The Canadian education system retains its traditional organization. From the beginning, the governments' reforms focused on students' ability and learner outcomes. In this manner, Canada adopted the view that the country's future prosperity depended on all students performing at high levels. The country designed specific policies to guarantee this learner outcome. As a result, Canadian higher education enrolment rates became one of the highest rates in the world, which is a significant indication of the growing awareness of the importance of higher education in a knowledge-based economy.

The study proves that in terms of preparing university graduates for the job market needs, it is urgent to pay intensive attention to professional and soft skills to produce well-equipped graduates whose enriched skills and broadened experiences prepare them to join the workforce easily and efficiently and meet market needs. Definitely, success will go to those countries that are swift to adapt to global knowledge markets. Marketing of higher education and attracting international students became a key driver of the three countries' prosperity through ensuring reputable quality of education.

### **Governance Approach**

In Egypt, significantly, the role of governments has a centralized role in shaping the national agenda, as opposed to the role of provincial and territorial governments in Canada and Australia. However, the current difference in the quality of education does not mean that the decentralized system would succeed in Egypt and achieve the same results as in Canada and Australia. Despite the lack of certainty, the Egypt centralized system needs to ease the educational policy restrictions and grant

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universities' presidents and administrators discretionary power to create programs and design new curriculum. Educational leaders are in the best place to help various segments of learners prepare for career life. This step will change public institutions towards an independent public administrative agency. The literature review proves that the adaptation of decentralization approach in governance minimized other country's heavy burdens. In contrast, the centralized approach is a routing system that leads to no local-level decisions (OECD, 2009).

### **Funding Higher Education**

Evidently, the funding of higher education and the governance approach are the major reasons beyond the disruption of higher educational reform in general. Seeking funding resources is a complex process and varies from country to another. In Canada, the government a significant investor in the capacity of universities and colleges and, through a range of funding mechanisms, shapes the direction of certain fields (i.e. towards genomic investments). The Canadian government plays an advocacy role on behalf of universities, and it has been influential in both shaping government attitudes towards universities and in helping universities collaborate. On the other hand, the case of Egypt exemplifies the influence of budget shortage and lack of funding resources, particularly as the higher education system in Egypt is huge and serving a growing percentage of population. This is because the Ministry of Higher Education manages university budgets in a highly centralized and inefficient manner (OECD, 2010).

### **Increasing Access Opportunities**

Greater attention needs to be given to structural reform, changing the institutional culture and increasing the capacity of the system to contribute to the realization of national goals. One way to do this is reflecting students' critical thinking skills in the admission criteria for student access to higher education. Indeed, lifelong education has become a necessity to provide graduates of the education system with job market required skills, as well as to accommodate the fast changing education and supplementary needs of modern society. The country should be flexible and facilitate lifelong learning through public institutions (Charbonneau, 2012).

In Canada, all universities and colleges offer blended learning, with an increasing focus on the use of open education resources, especially in Western

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Canada. The Canadian Virtual University provides online learning degree programs that offer courses to all Canadians. Canada is a leader on providing online and distance education worldwide demonstrating the support of policy makers and institutional leaders for innovations in the application of technology (Jean-Louis, 2015). Competition for the enrolment of international students became a reason for vulnerability and fluctuations in the international student market when the modern concept of university internationalization became a strategic goal for many governments, including Australia and Canada. Both countries are targeting not only internationalization as a global trend with economic, political, and social changes, but also attracting a greater number of international students.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, the main findings explored in this study reveal the urgent need for building quality audit procedure to assess each institution's effectiveness in achieving its goals (Harvey & Williams, 2010). It is urgent to assure and improve the quality of higher education system through building self-regulating universities and institutions based on the experience of Australia (Probert, 2015). The implementation of quality assurance systems should not be premised predominantly on external demands, instead it should focus on improving the self-evaluation procedure. This would serve to increase faculty autonomy, and improve of educational quality (Weusthof, 1995). The quality assurance system is more powerful than accreditation systems, as it focuses on student learning outcomes (Probert, 2015). For Canada and Egypt, there is much to learn from reforming policy and practice in Australia to maintain and assure higher educational quality. Furthermore, applying the decentralized approach to higher education leads to a complex arrangement of different systems, as referred to in the context of Canada, which faced a range of challenges related to the absence of quality assessment mechanisms and national policy framework (Johns, 2014).

Egypt should learn from Australia's remarkable experience in providing Vocational and Technical Education (VET), which focused on providing skills for the labor market to link students' learning to job market (Jongbloed, 2008). The Egyptian higher education system needs to demonstrate the quality of its teaching and learning and to assure the learners of the value of their growing investment in country's future. It is essential to learn that greater competition and less regulation will also improve

educational quality (Probert, 2015). Canadian governments, colleges and universities supported the idea of a “liberal education” focused on skills, competencies, and relevant programming (Jean-Louis, 2015). From this, it is inferable that how Australia and Canada continued to be on the top ten for three years (U21, 2016). Egypt has to learn from the Canadian higher education expansion in access to higher education, as it is one of the remarkable achievements in recent years (Johns, 2014).

The lessons learned from those countries journeys in higher education policy reform contribute to provide an answer to the question of how can Egypt benefit from the higher education reform journeys undertaken by Australia and Canada. In short, it is essential to create higher education value and relevancy.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

In this section, the study provides its concluding recommendations for reforming Egyptian higher education policies and practices. In reference to the literature review, enhancing the quality of higher education is a priority for the government in most countries seeking higher education development, which currently interpreted as an international knowledge economy.

One suggestion for decreasing the unemployment rate depends on higher education to produce the workforce needed for labor market requirements. There is well-documented global awareness of the importance of producing well-equipped graduates with enriched skills and broadened experiences. This would eradicate the main issues of unemployment rates, under-utilized youth enthusiasm and power, and unfulfilled the job market requirements. Factually, Egypt paid intensive attention to the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system during Nasser era (1952- 1970), because the national goal was to establish an industrial country based on Egyptian youth and their skills (Álvarez-Galván, 2015). In 2016, the economic situation re-stressed the idea of returning intensive attention to the TVET system, with a new generation of technical workforce fully equipped with the required skills and ready to engage effectively in the job market. Refocusing on the TVET studies in Egypt will help decrease the nation-wide unemployment rate, fulfill the needs of the market, and re-balance the distribution of the enrollment rate of higher education students in different fields.



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The Australian experience providing a higher education system with high student satisfaction and graduate employment outcomes resulted in globally accepted Australian qualifications. The Egyptian Government is likewise committed to providing universities with additional flexibility to innovate and differentiate themselves through offering students more choices and higher quality offerings. Drawing on the Egyptian experience, this could be achieved by giving higher education institutions the freedom to design modern innovative programs depend on contemporary methods for their students.

Regarding the job market needs and graduate skills, there is a global impetus for governments to motivate higher education institutions to strengthen their relationships with socio-economic community (Munro, 2014). In response to this imperative, governments addressed modern policies to boost innovation and productivity with equality and program effectiveness. The concept of market-framing not only refers to connecting higher education to business or industry, but also to restructuring higher education institutions as a business organization (Cowen, 1991). This trend builds strong ties between institutions and job market requirements to draw the learner future in his career life.

A considerable body of research examines the benefits of work experience, courses, and activities that develop a curriculum's ability to foster employability and technical skills. Egypt needs to begin this research and come up with the required strategy and implementation process for these well-known goals.

A study of Australian overseas provision of transnational English-language teaching programs recommended full consultation with group of representatives of employers prior to creation of academic programs because this will ensure the design meets job market requirements (Dunworth, 2008). This is a way to close the gap between education and job market requirements. Knight and Yorke (2003) suggest four strategies to enhance students' employability:

- (1) Attaching job requirements to degree programs;
- (2) Designing entrepreneurship modules that stimulate complex learning achievements and risk-taking;
- (3) Allowing career advisors to provide advice to students and contribute to program design and delivery; and
- (4) Encouraging students to reflect on their achievements.

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I recommend these strategies to be applied in Egypt in order to equip learners for career life.

The Egyptian government is also struggling to improve the whole higher education system, especially during the period of 2015-2017. However, the swift response to modern changes in the neoliberal world is urgent. According to the Egyptian strategic plan of 2014-2030, the country intends to achieve growth in Egyptian socio-economic situation through sustainable development, justice, stable growth, and guarantee of a prosperous life to all people. The country hopes lies in the quality of education of its human resources, due to the growing awareness of education's impact on nations' future development, cultural enlightenment, and economic growth (MOHE, 2014).

The study recommends that higher education institutions create internal units to assure and maintain the good performance and sustainability according to the quality standards and for the purpose of educational quality assurance. This could entail self-monitoring, self-evaluation, or internal auditing. Indeed, building a strong internal transparent system in data collection and reporting on the quality of teaching and programs will likely ensure that the higher education institutions provide high caliber programs and services and identify opportunities for continual improvement (Martin & Stella, 2007). This paves the way towards improving the quality of the whole system of higher education to create an internal evaluation process that measure the quality and effectiveness of various aspects of higher educational system in each institution. Educational quality in Egypt needs to improve the assessment of learning outcomes and quality assurance.

This study recommends that Egyptian government prioritizes finalizing the accreditation of the higher education institutions rapidly and without exception. This will be a method of supporting the institution confidence in their performance and prove that the institution is following the national standards identified through NAQAAE. Egypt needs to revisit its admission policy of higher education to be aligned with its process for quality assurance and accreditation.

Lastly, this study addresses the simultaneous comparative analysis of higher education policy reforms in three countries in terms of achieving the goals of higher education quality and increasing higher education relevancy to the job market. This

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reflects the needs of a neoliberal world during the last decade. These two goals are achievable through paying an intensive attention to the following processes:

- Establishing internal system of self-evaluation in each university and institution to reveal the internal level of quality and open the door for internal guidance and self-improvements.
- Building standards guide for admission, qualification, programs, designing curriculum and teacher skills and qualification.
- Following an internal quality assurance system and internal audit system to maintain the good performance with transparency.
- Establishing strong external quality assurance system to monitor, guide and audit the institution quality system periodically.
- Modernizing teaching methods and applying rewarding policy for remarkable teachers.
- Designing assessment methods that are fairer with transparency.
- Seeking student satisfaction within healthy environment.
- Tailoring programs with accredited respectable qualification level to cope with the knowledge-based economy.
- Creating new reasonable funding resources to allocate budgets.
- Establishing communication lines between the market and the higher education institutions in terms of offering training for students and jobs after graduation.

Significantly, Australia, Canada and Egypt all exerted significant efforts during the last decade to cope with the rapid changes in the neoliberal world and the knowledge-based economy. However, this study recommends that they conduct additional studies in the process of building system standards and quality assurance to control the new systems standards. Essentially, there is an imperative for leaders, reformers, policy-makers and/or decision-makers to establish more effective and affordable career-training institutions. Indeed, robust education system heavily affects country's economic development.

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